



EPISCOPAL NEWS SERVICE

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99-087

Executive Council plans for future, proposes Minneapolis for General Convention in 2003

by James Solheim

(ENS) The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, meeting for the first time in the Diocese of Fond du Lac in Wisconsin, continued its work on a budget process, laid plans for new program initiatives in preparation for next summer's General Convention, and proposed Minneapolis as the site for the 2003 convention.

In the opening plenary on June 14, House of Deputies president Pamela Chinnis reported that she had been "energized" in her meetings with the church on the local level, that it was "refreshing" to meet church members who were concerned with "how to live a Christian life in today's world." This is the challenge always before us, to balance care for the institution of the church, Christ's body, with commitment to the mission of the church, to bring the reconciling love of Christ to all the world."

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold reported on his own encounters with the church in recent months. He said that the recent meeting of the bishops in Texas revealed continuing attempts by the bishops to serve as "a community of wisdom" for the whole church." Despite "some tensions among certain bishops," he is convinced that they are in a "good, solid place" and want to work together on the issues facing the church.

Commenting on the recent report on authority by the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (see ENS May 26), he encouraged Episcopalians to regard it "not as a finished document" but rather an invitation to reflection, especially about the ministry exercised by the bishop of Rome.

The Zacchaeus Report, now being sent to all congregations by the Episcopal Church Foundation, is a "careful sampling" of how people at the local level view their church (see separate article). It reveals broad recognition that the church is alive and well and doing effective ministry, especially in dealing with differences, he said. It also reveals some "real concern about how decisions are made," he added. But it is clear that "Episcopalians find their identity through worship—the Eucharist is central to their lives."

Griswold said that a recent meeting of the board of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief endorsed a capital funds drive to celebrate its 60th anniversary and will study how the drive can best be "integrated" into the life of the church.

Following a trip to Washington, where he met with Congressional leaders as well as representatives of the World Bank and civil rights advocates, Griswold issued a statement urging them to address the issue of world debt and the heavy burden it places on developing nations (see statement in Newsfeatures). The conversations in Washington also raised questions about his own role in public affairs.

Addressing the future

Council members, under the leadership of the planning and evaluation committee, engaged in small group discussions about the future program of the church. As a result they urged programs to promote diversity, expand the capacity for communication and develop leadership for the future, without affecting the church's emphasis on or support for global mission and programs in peace and justice.

"We want to become a church rich with diversity, we want to enhance communications for the 21st century and we want to make disciples and apostles," said the Rev. Bavi Rivera of California, chair of the committee.

Treasurer Stephen Duggan reported that national income is "quite strong," and that 70 percent of the dioceses are pledging at or above the requested formula. "There is no indication that any portion of the budget will be significantly out of line," he said, and that the good news is that the church will be "close to budget" for the second consecutive year.

The council continued to develop a more flexible and responsive budget process, one that Duggan has been advocating in this triennium. Griswold urged the council not to start with budgets, because that too often highlights scarcities, but to look first at mission and then the monetary resources. He quoted the late Cardinal Suenens of Belgium who said, "The trouble with the church is that it lives with such low expectations."

Griswold said that the church should ask, "What are the gifts of grace and signs of abundance among us? Where is the energy and passion and how can they be linked, how do we encourage and support ministry?" He added that "we need to be stretched as individuals and as a church," trying to "imagine the future we want for ourselves."

The council endorsed plans for a new network of all the groups involved in world mission into an Episcopal Partnership for Global Mission, to provide "greater coherence in the midst of some confusion," said the Rev. Titus Presler of Massachusetts in his presentation on behalf of the planners. The network would address "some misunderstanding and even some competition" and attempt to overcome distinctions between what are often perceived as official and unofficial mission efforts, he said.

Anti-racism training session

Council members spent a morning in anti-racism training, a crucial effort by the church to deal with a subject that "grieves the Holy Spirit," according to Griswold in an introductory meditation. Racism is "a denial of communion," he said, which undermines "the very nature of the church," adding that it is "blasphemy" to say that we live in the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and not take seriously what communion demands of us.

The council commended the presiding bishop and staff for its diplomatic initiatives and humanitarian efforts in the Balkan crisis and pledged to support continuing attempts by the religious community to seek healing and reconciliation. Richard Parkins, fresh from visiting refugee camps in Macedonia, described those efforts to support refugees and seek their return to Kosovo.

The council also urged Congress to pass comprehensive gun control legislation, restricting access to firearms by children by stiffening background checks for purchases. It recommended a response to gun violence at next summer's General Convention.

The Rev. Karen Parker, an observer to council from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, offered a sobering assessment about the fate of the new proposal for full communion, Called to Common Mission, based on strong opposition to adoption by Lutherans of the historic episcopate. "What impedes my hope is that the opposition is strong and well-organized," she said. An alternate proposal that would seek a continuing relationship between the two churches without sharing the historic episcopate is gaining support, she said.

Council members journeyed to the nearby city of Fond du Lac for a reception and a special Fortieth Annual Eucharistic Festival with a packed congregation at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul the Apostle. Bishop Russell Jacobus and the presiding bishop preached.

The cathedral emptied during the procession, adoration and benediction of the blessed sacrament on the lawn of the cathedral, followed by a picnic.

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

99-084

Presiding Bishop urges Congress to pass debt relief bill

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) Citing the biblical call for Jubilee and the Episcopal Church's ministry to the poor, Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold has urged Congress to support a bill that would bring debt relief to the world's poorest countries.

"I believe this bill fulfills a difficult task," he said in testimony (see text in Newsfeatures) submitted to the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services. "It offers a Jubilee vision of debt relief, moving the United States into a position of world leadership on this issue." He added that the bill also "lifts up" the call for debt relief issued by last summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops "to genuinely benefit the poor by creating sophisticated mechanisms for poverty reduction, accountability, and good governance."

Griswold's three-page statement was a result of two days of meetings with what he called "a very diverse group" of leaders from government and international organizations in Washington, D.C. Griswold said that he was encouraged by conversations about "public service as a form of ministry."

After meeting with Rep. James A. Leach (R-Iowa), chair of the committee, the presiding bishop was invited to testify on the proposed Debt Relief and Poverty Act of 1999 currently before Congress. Since he had to chair the Executive Council meeting in Wisconsin, preventing him from attending the bill's June 15 committee hearing, Griswold sent a statement to the committee.

The bill, sponsored by Leach and Rep. John LaFalce (D-New York), would cancel most debt owed to the United States by heavily-indebted poor countries and reduce debt owed by these countries to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions.

It also would require each country aided through the bill to establish a human development fund dedicated to reducing the number of persons living in poverty, expanding access of the poorest members of society to basic social services and preventing the degradation of the environment. The legislation would expand the number of eligible countries from the current 29 to 45.

Lambeth Conference concern

In his testimony, Griswold told the committee that debt relief had been a chief topic of concern at last summer's Lambeth Conference, the once-a-decade meeting of all the bishops of the worldwide Anglican Communion. He noted that the 750 bishops at the conference eventually adopted without dissent a statement calling for the cancellation of unpayable debts of poor countries and for more responsible action from debtor and creditor countries, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

With that as background, Griswold pointed to two concerns that undergirded his statement supporting debt relief.

First is Jubilee 2000, the worldwide movement for debt relief inspired by the biblical texts in Leviticus 25, in which God told Moses that vineyards and fields must be allowed to rest and recuperate every seventh year. Further, every 50th year should be a Jubilee Year in which the land is allowed to lie fallow, slaves are set free, land returned to its original owners, and debts canceled.

"The essence of Jubilee is related to suspending patterns—patterns of work, patterns of domination, patterns of acquisition," Griswold said.

The second concern, he said, is combating poverty.

"For me, for the Anglican bishops, and for most advocates for debt relief, the reality that overwhelming debts push the poorest members of our earth deeper and deeper into poverty is cause to take action. These poor countries are caught in a cycle of debt they cannot escape, borrowing more money to make payments on old debts," he said.

Servicing debt can take up to 40 percent of a poor country's budget, takes money away from much-needed human development, education and environmental projects and sends it to rich donor nations, he said.

Countries under these debt burdens probably could have made some better spending decisions in the past and, of course, debts should be paid as a rule, Griswold said, "but that must be weighed against the cost of human suffering."

That suffering, he noted, "is almost unimaginable by U.S. standards." He asked the committee to "imagine the homeless person you see in the streets of Washington, and then imagine that 80 percent of Washington was in or near that same condition.... Something must be done."

Passage of the Debt Relief for Poverty Reduction Act, he added, would offer a concrete step toward beginning to create conditions in which many of these countries can lift themselves from poverty.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church.

99-084S

Sidebar:

Episcopal Church helped to develop debt relief bill

(ENS) The proposed Debt Relief for Poverty Reduction Act of 1999, which received strong support from Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold during its June 15 House committee hearing, in fact received Episcopal Church input from its beginnings.

The church's Office of Government Relations in Washington, D.C., worked for more than a year with a coalition of other churches and development organizations to develop this legislation, said Tom Hart, director of the office.

He noted that, although Griswold did not appear at the hearing to deliver his three-page statement, he was quoted prominently during the hearing by House Banking and Financial Services Committee Chairman James Leach, an Iowa Republican who also is an Episcopalian.

Griswold was among the first of many church leaders to endorse the legislation that would provide debt relief to the world's poorest countries under arrangements that would encourage human development. This Episcopal Church effort for debt relief is part of the Jubilee 2000 worldwide movement inspired by biblical texts calling for a year in which land is allowed to lie fallow, slaves are set free, land is returned to its original owners and debts are cancelled. —**Kathryn McCormick**

99-089

Episcopal Communicators meet at Sewanee, honor best work of past year

by James Solheim

(ENS) The annual meeting of Episcopal Communicators at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, May 26-30, was a high-spirited mix of speakers, workshops and awards for the best work of the last year. The theme was "Feeding the Soul, Mind and Body."

Opening with a reception and barbecue on the campus of the seminary, participants were off to a bouncy start with the Kentucky Colonels Bluegrass Band in the new Tennessee Williams Center.

After morning meditations by Bishop Robert Tharp, the retired bishop of East Tennessee, the 140 communicators registered for the conference waded into workshops dealing with writing, design and advertising, but also including working with clay and exploring caves in the area.

Among the 155 awards given to newspapers, magazines, specialized print, and electronic media, the top awards for general excellence went to *Journal of Women's Ministries* in the magazine category, with *The Witness* and *Anglican World* receiving awards of merit; *Anglican Advance*, Diocese of Chicago, was the top newspaper with a circulation above 12,000, with *Maryland Church News* winning an award of merit; there was a tie for award of merit for newspapers under 12,000 between the *Record*, Diocese of Michigan, and *Trinity*, the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

In the category for agency newspapers, *Episcopal Life* received the award of excellence and *Kanuga News* the award of merit. (A complete list of awards is available online at www.dfms.org/communicators/pollybond/1999polly.html).

An irascible spirit

Noted author and civil rights activist Will Campbell was not only the keynote speaker but his irascible spirit and quick wit infused the whole meeting.

Describing himself as "a low church Baptist" who was an Episcopalian "briefly--but it didn't work," Campbell said he came from "a long line of hell-raisers." Despite some recent health problems, his interactions with participants demonstrated that his spirit and his opinions are still strong.

Campbell began by exploring the state of moral leadership today, urging "less self-righteousness and a degree of humility" in our national political life. He blasted the death penalty and argued that "we invented ethnic cleansing, for God's sake—and it does work. We built an empire on it," pointing to the treatment of the American Indian as a startling example. And he wondered if that piece of our history "is still on the nation's conscience."

While working with the National Council on race relations he concluded that "this nation was founded on violence—racial violence." Campbell's most recent book is "And Also with You—Duncan Gray and the American Dilemma," the story of an Episcopal bishop's struggle against racial segregation in Mississippi.

And with 3500 people on death row, "maybe our hearts are so hardened that we couldn't repent if we wanted to," he said.

He admitted that he doesn't take much hope in big government and deplored the dearth of "moral voices." He wondered where the moral authority to "abolish the sport of warfare" would come from. "And where is the moral voice to defend the almost extinct family farm?" he asked. "Sick is the nation in which Larry Flynt [editor of *Hustler* magazine] is the least hypocritical voice in high places."

Campbell, who has a lesbian daughter, also wondered "why we put labels on each other? Where is the moral voice against the rising tide of homophobia?" When some have approached him to suggest that the church isn't ready to come to terms with homosexuality, he has responded, "The institutional church hasn't come to terms with heterosexuality."

He read some of his work while communicators gathered around a bonfire at the site of the Highlander Folk School, a training ground in the struggle for racial equality.

What is the church press?

"What is the purpose of the church press?" asked the Rev. David Moore of Sewanee in his sermon at the conference Eucharist. "What are the stories you write, the articles that make a difference—what is your task, your purpose?"

He suggested some possibilities. "You tell the stories of our life together, our ministries, our struggles, our foibles, our joys... You are conduits of information, sources, insight and analysis. You are interpreters and guides... On occasion you adopt a prophetic distance, a prophetic stance over against institutional structures."

Moore said that he looks for hope in communications from the church. "I look for encouragement and, at the same time, the challenge of passion for justice and righteousness which moves through the heart of another. I look for witness of God's activity, God's grace, God's compassion, lived out in the lives of people, congregations and communities. It is absolutely vital that we hear these stories of God's movement, stirring God's people to share in God's loving action."

He urged the communicators to be guided by the question, "What will further the work, love and purpose of Christ?" And he concluded, "Tell stories which break open our minds and hearts, that show us where Christ's heart is breaking, so that God's grace can flow through us. Tell stories that call us out of self-centered disregard to new compassion, care and hope."

He ended by warning that, because the church's communicators "see the best and the worst of the church, disillusionment, cynicism and despair are frequent companions. And your role of telling the truth brings you up against unfair structures and self-serving people all too frequently. Seek the things that give you life, that give you joy..."

The future of communications?

Herb Gunn of Michigan, president of Episcopal Communicators, said that the organization "has been knocking on the door of the church for 25 years" but there is still some confusion over the role of communicators in the church. Yet he reported that the organization would make a presentation to the House of Bishops meeting in September.

"We want to help the church tell its story," Gunn said, "to share the Good News—even if it is bad news. And we want to challenge the church to recognize the value of what

we do.” He suggested that members work toward a goal of 10 percent of diocesan budgets set aside for communication.

Yet he pointed out that there are still “empty chairs” at meetings of the communicators—some representing colleagues who have lost their jobs, but also others who are not affiliated with the organization. “We need to work on the issue of vocation.”

“Not only must we continue to communicate the message of the Episcopal Church to the outside world, we must be courageously persuasive within the church about the nature and the need for effective communications,” he wrote in an article prior to the meeting.

Elected to the board were Ed Stannard of *Episcopal Life*, Karin Hamilton of Connecticut and Kay Collier-Slone of Lexington.

--James Solheim is the director of the Episcopal Church's Office of News and Information.

99-090

Construction begins on Honduran houses sponsored by the Presiding Bishop's Fund

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) With an impressive ground-breaking ceremony, construction began in June on the first house in “Faith, Hope and Joy: A Project for Living,” the Honduran housing project sponsored by the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief.

“We were very pleased that so many officials were present for the ceremony,” said Abigail Nelson, the fund's coordinator for the project, which is located near San Pedro Sula. She noted that the vice-president of Honduras, Juan Bendeck, headed a local delegation that also included regional leaders and the head of the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Equally important was the presence of all the Anglican bishops of Central America, with the exception of Sturdy Downs of Nicaragua, who was unable to attend, Nelson said.

“We discussed possible programs for the rest of Latin America,” she said, “and all the bishops have agreed to try to give the fund proposals in the next few months for ongoing projects.”

Nelson said the fund also was pleased by the presence of reporters from *La Prensa*, Honduras' national newspaper, and from CNN Latin America.

The first three-year phase of “Faith, Hope and Joy” will include construction of 95 houses, to be built by volunteers from the Episcopal Church and the families who will make the houses their homes. The families have lived in temporary quarters since the country was devastated by Hurricane Mitch last October. The fund hopes eventually to build a total of 500 houses.

“The response we've had from the church has been tremendous,” Nelson said of the call for volunteers. For example, during the two weeks following the ground-breaking ceremony, she received nearly 80 requests from groups and individuals seeking information about volunteering. She is already signing people up to work during the summer of 2000, she said.

The Diocese of Washington and the South American Missionary Society (SAMS) also are sponsoring major house-building projects.

Nelson said that engineers currently are designing the plans for the distribution of fresh water to each house site and for the installation of sewerage. Foundations are being laid out and the machinery for making the concrete blocks to construct the houses is ready.

Digging has begun for the well, she said, adding that as many as 20 families will be living at the project site by next fall, when the Executive Council is scheduled to meet in San Pedro Sula.

Editor's note: To learn more about "Faith, Hope and Joy" or to volunteer to help build the new houses, call Abigail Nelson at 800-334-7626, ext. 6139, or email her at anelson@dfms.org. Contributions to support the project (each house costs \$3,100) may be sent to the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief, P.O. Box 12043, Newark, NJ. Checks should be designated for Honduras Houses.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church.

99-086

Zacchaeus survey confirms a Church energy source—its congregations

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) What does it mean to be an Episcopalian at the end of the second Millennium?

The report of an ambitious survey of church members has found that Episcopalians are committed to worship and the Anglican tradition that binds them; that many of the church's local congregations are characterized by a healthy sense of vitality and common mission, and that many congregations share a commitment to be inclusive.

At the same time, Episcopalians seem to yearn for more support from and a better relationship with the church's diocesan and national structures, which, some church members said, have not adapted well to the increasing role of laity in the church over recent decades.

The report, copies of which were mailed in late June to every parish in the Episcopal Church, is an important step in the Zacchaeus Project, which was commissioned by the Episcopal Church Foundation as a gift to the church to mark the foundation's 50th anniversary this year. The research was conducted by Cornerstone, a ministry of the foundation.

The project actually began last year with detailed interviews of some 2,000 Episcopalians in nine dioceses selected to reflect the diversity of the whole church. Parishes churchwide are now being asked to discuss the report, which will be the focus of a Trinity Institute teleconference in September. More churchwide teleconferences will be held through May 2000.

No definitive conclusions

The Zacchaeus Project "is a work in progress," foundation president George Fowlkes said in a letter accompanying the report. He emphasized that the report, while presenting the answers gathered in many interviews, has drawn no definitive conclusions. The project, he said, is an "overall effort to stage a national conversation about our life together."

The project was launched with the encouragement and support of Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, who noted in a statement, "The report bears out what I have observed myself over these last months: parishes are healthy and grounded in their worship. Thus

grounded, we are moving out from our church communities and into our neighborhoods to respond to the needs as we find them. Our relationship with the Risen Christ has called us into relationship with all of God's people."

He also acknowledged, "The report challenges our national structures, and indeed diocesan structures, to make plain our imperative of supporting the ministry and mission of congregations to increase their capacity for ministry by building networks and providing resources for education, leadership, and faith formation."

The report notes that the Zacchaeus Project was commissioned last year, the first year of Griswold's nine-year term as presiding bishop and a point at the end of one millennium and the beginning of another. The project was named for the biblical character, described in Luke 19, who climbed a sycamore tree to gain a better look at Jesus.

The research was directed by an Episcopal lay person and sociologist, Thomas P. Holland of the University of Georgia, and a parish priest and historian, William L. Sachs, rector of St. Matthew's Church in Wilton, Connecticut.

Five interviewers spoke with about 2,000 Episcopalians in 250 individual or focus group meetings representing nearly 5 percent of Episcopal congregations. Dioceses chosen for the research included Central Florida, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Texas, West Missouri, Kansas, Minnesota, Nevada and Los Angeles.

In addition to speaking with lay people in those dioceses, the interviewers met with focus groups of seminarians, clergy, young adults and residents of an Episcopal retirement community.

The interview process focused on lay people in local congregations, the report said, explaining that studies of Episcopal identity typically have looked at the church through the eyes of theologians and bishops, who often mingled their ideals of church life with only select references to data drawn from actual church life.

The interviewers wanted to hear directly from the vast majority of those in the church; its lay members.

Core of Episcopal identity

At the core of Episcopal identity, the report said, are the Book of Common Prayer and the liturgy. "Over 95 percent of respondents in both independent surveys and interviews agreed that the Eucharist, liturgy, and the Prayer Book were central to the lives of their congregations," the report emphasized.

"The Episcopal Church has a long history and many rich traditions that shape our liturgy," said one parishioner. "That is our common ground. Also, it doesn't discourage thinking, facing your doubts, and struggling with them. I believe that is a major attraction. It certainly has been a major part of my growth."

Spiritual growth, and the sense of being on a spiritual journey together, were important to many congregants, the report said.

"At a time when many Americans define themselves as spiritual seekers," it commented, "one of the Episcopal Church's attractions may be the extent of its openness to such a quest."

Not everyone agreed. "In a few sites," the report said, "participants voiced dismay over the Episcopal Church's tolerance for what they saw as too wide a range of views and beliefs. Some stances, such as denying the resurrection or advocating acceptance of homosexuality, fall outside the boundaries of the historic Christian faith, they stress, and Episcopal leadership has substituted political correctness for biblical truths."

Whether they feel they are sharing a spiritual journey or not, most Episcopalians in local congregations share a "profound sense of community [that] exists not for its own sake,

and certainly not for the sake of institutional loyalty alone. Their calling to follow Christ together inspires a sense of shared mission," according to the report.

"Connectedness"

"We really listen to one another," said one church member, "respect our differences, and come to conclusions much easier than I ever expect. We hang in there together and work through difficult problems. There's a deep sense of connectedness among us."

This "connectedness" is the product of hard work, many conceded, but it helped congregations through losses, challenges and changes, and often these painful periods served to deepen the sense of community.

Further, most respondents see their spiritual growth as leading to ministry and outreach, the report stated. From soup kitchens to schools to building a clinic in a remote South American village, Episcopalians have found many forms of service.

Leadership in these congregations is often seen as a responsibility shared by the clergy and the laity—an indication to the interviewers that "there has been a decisive shift in the Episcopal Church's life over the past half-century," according to the report. The place of ordained leaders—many congregants praised the work the clergy had done in their congregations—and of other bodies such as vestries remains intact, the report said, but "a broad and rather informal view of leadership has taken hold."

Even as they expressed their enthusiasm about their parish life, Episcopalians acknowledged that the demands of the current social environment are pressuring laity to increase their skills in leadership, pastoral care and mission, and they are looking to wider church structures for resources to meet these demands.

Concerned about hierarchy

At this point, many noted their concerns about the capability of programs sponsored by diocesan and national offices to respond effectively.

One respondent said with despair, "The diocese isn't doing anything about outreach, about Christian education, about the seminaries, or anything else I can see. And neither are the national offices. I'm afraid we're becoming congregationalist in our approach, and losing our rich Anglican heritage. But when there's nothing going on at the top, who's left to do the work?"

The report added later, however, "Despite obvious ambivalence about the church's hierarchy, many of our respondents hoped to find ways to draw their locality into better partnership with it. The resilience of this hope should be a major source of encouragement for the Episcopal Church's professional leadership."

Copies of the 61-page report are available from Cornerstone at a cost of \$5 each. Requests may be made by phone (901) 527-1450, by fax (901) 523-8952 or by email cstone@mmem.net. The report is online at the Episcopal Church Foundation's Web site: www.episcopalfoundation.org.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church.

99-091

Convocation of churches in Europe moves towards formation of diocese

by James Solheim

(ENS) A consultation of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe has advocated formation of its eight parishes and five mission congregations into a diocese—and expressed determination to work with other Anglicans in Europe to form a new province of the Anglican Communion.

The May 7-9 consultation in Nice, France, also developed a mission plan that includes training centers for lay and ordained ministries, a youth ministry, additional mission churches and an effort to create multi-cultural European forms of Anglicanism.

In his letter of invitation to the Mission 2000 Consultation, Bishop Jeffery Rowthorn described the event as a sign of a “new missionary awareness” emerging in the parishes.

Last summer’s Lambeth Conference of the world’s Anglican bishops encouraged efforts to establish a new province in partnership with Anglicans in Spain and Portugal as a “multi-national, multi-lingual and multi-cultural Anglican fellowship within the New Europe.”

The convocation originated with parishes in several European cities catering to wealthy American expatriates, many of them chaplaincies. The American church provided a suffragan bishop to serve the loosely organized Convocation.

That ministry has broadened in recent years as people with mixed cultural and religious backgrounds have found a home under the broad tent of Anglicanism—including refugees and local Christians. Worship is now offered in French, Italian, Spanish and Chinese, as well as English. And the role of bishop has also expanded so that it is now a full-time position, still tied to the American church. (Rowthorn has announced his intention to resign, telling Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold in his letter of resignation that he and his wife Anne “have been exhilarated by the new missionary challenges and ecumenical opportunities which present themselves daily in the New Europe.”)

In his keynote address to the consultation, Prof. Ian Douglas of the Episcopal Divinity School in Massachusetts spoke of the need for Anglicanism to find an authentic European expression—not in order to advance Anglicanism itself, “but rather for the sake of restoring all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”

In his own address to the consultation, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali of Rochester in the Church of England addressed the “shape of the church to come.” In examining the various forms the church has taken over the centuries, he agreed with Douglas that Anglicanism should find a distinctive European form to express its catholicity in an authentic way.

In its Statement of Mission Intent, the consultation said that the time is ripe for the “re-evangelization of Europe,” calling on the participation of all Christians. “We do not seek to convert Christians who are already faithful in another church, but rather to join with them in their witness to the power of the Gospel in modern societies which are dominantly secular and pluralistic,” the statement said.

--based on a press release written by Joe Britton, canon missionary to the bishop of the convocation and priest at a mission congregation in France.

99-092

Archbishop of Canterbury warmly greeted by Anglicans in South America

by Jerry Hames

(**Episcopal Life**) Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury, in a weeklong swing in late May through the Church of Brazil and the strongly evangelical Church of the Southern Cone, made a worldwide call to churches to throw open their doors to welcome strangers.

"We must welcome people, we must care for them, we must ensure they feel at home in our worship and that we relate our faith to the needs of people outside," he said. Carey visited the dioceses of Northern Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay. In Montevideo, Uruguay's capital, where he addressed the provincial synod, Carey warned that it is easy for the church to talk about mission, but fail to act on it.

He described "an innocent sign" on the porch of a church in his diocese that reads: "Keep this door firmly shut, sheep may enter." For too many years, this has been the unspoken view of many Anglican churches: This church is not for you; keep out," he said.

Youth and leadership development are other challenges the church faces, Carey said. He encouraged Anglicans to take seriously their mission to young people by focusing on their needs and goals. "And, finally, we must raise up godly, educated men and women for Christ's work," Carey said.

Vote on women priests fails

However, the Anglicans in the Southern Cone will not have female priests to continue the church's work — at least for now. A vote to permit dioceses to ordain women as priests failed to get the required two-thirds approval.

The proposed motion, approved by a majority of those present, sought permission from the province to allow dioceses to proceed with such ordinations if they wished. A provincial press release said that bishops and delegates who opposed the resolution spoke of their desire to be faithful to biblical witness.

Two women deacons from Montevideo who attended the synod took Carey and his wife, Eileen, a nurse, to an AIDS hospital, where they have a ministry. Carey laid hands on the patients and prayed with the families during his visit. One of the deacons, Audrey Gonzales, originally a journalist from Tennessee, ministers to the English-speaking community at Holy Trinity Cathedral and at a home for the elderly.

"This is the most attention the church has ever received from the press and media," said Presiding Bishop Maurice Sinclair, who said he hopes Carey's visit will increase the church's visibility in the community. Reflecting the cathedral's active street ministry, people from all walks of life mingled with hundreds of others, and street children sat on the floor in front of the English ambassador and Eileen Carey during the service.

In the Diocese of Northern Argentina, Carey seized an opportunity to talk with government officials about concerns shared by the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches over land rights of the indigenous people and urged compliance of agreements already reached but not yet enforced.

Traditional Bolivian pipe music added to the festivities in Santa Cruz, when Carey joined Bishop Gregory Venables in consecrating a new church. The priest said the parish

ministry was one of “reconciliation and hope” in a community polarized by expanding Christian fundamentalism.

In Uruguay, Carey urged in his address to provincial synod that lay and ordained ministers prepare themselves to encounter diversity in the secular world and with other members of a worldwide Christian church. “This is something that Anglicanism has sometimes struggled to acknowledge, preferring to focus on the local and immediate.

“The days are gone when parochialism can work,” he said. “What we do or say here can so easily be broadcast to the other side of the world within seconds. So I want to encourage outward-looking theological education that will strengthen the identity of this province and equip your people for the realities of the word and the church today.”

Arriving by small plane at Ing Suarez in the Chaco region of northern Argentina, Carey was greeted by a city that is 80 percent Anglican. More than 6,000 filled the city arena for a three-hour Festival of Praise.

--based on reports from the Anglican Communion News Service by Jim Rosenthal and the Latin American and Caribbean Communication Agency.

99-093

Debt conference calls for ‘fresh start’ for Africa

by James Solheim

(ENS) The voices were urgent—and angry, calling for the forgiveness of international debts owed by African nations to give them a “fresh start,” and also for a new economic order based on mutuality rather than exploitation.

An intense three-day consultation dealing with trade, aid, and debt drew a wide variety of people committed to economic justice for Africa, limited not just to experts but including students, former missionaries, government officials and church leaders.

Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town Njongonkulu Ndungane gave the keynote address for the June 4-6 consultation in a suburb of Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Washington Office on Africa and the Stony Point Conference Center. Increasingly recognized as a leading spokesman for economic justice for his continent, the archbishop was blunt in calling for the “cancellation of unpayable debts as a first significant step towards a new economic beginning for the developing world, in particular Africa,” providing “a springboard to new hope, to a new dispensation of economic justice.”

A net of debt

Speaking to a crowd at the Cannon House Office Building, Ndungane traced the debt crisis, beginning with the liberation movements of the 1960s when leaders “grasped at economic lifelines thrown out by developed countries,” not aware that “they were being caught up in the net of foreign debt that would drag them further into a sea of poverty.”

As a result, he said, “millions of people in developing countries now live in abject poverty while a massive transfer of wealth takes place, from the people of the south to the industrialized nations of the north.” It is now estimated that Africa owes over \$227 billion to creditors, about \$400 for every man, woman and child on the continent, by some estimates.

In many instances, he noted, the debt was incurred by oppressive governments. In South Africa, for example, the apartheid regime racked up a debt of about \$62 billion, debts which "should be declared odious and written off."

"Poor countries are obliged by the International Monetary Fund and other representatives of rich creditor nations to prioritize debt payments and to do this by diverting funds from health, clean water, sanitation and human development," Ndungane said. His call for a Mediation Council that would "establish legal principles and standards to govern international lending and borrowing," was endorsed by last summer's Lambeth Conference of the world's Anglican and Episcopal bishops meeting in Canterbury, England.

The scandal of our age

While the gap widens between the rich and the poor nations, "Planet Earth rent asunder by such division and injustice is heading for shipwreck." He added that "the single greatest scandal of our age" is the "massive transfer of resources from poorer countries to the wealthy, whether through debt repayments or the inequalities of global trade."

Standing on the threshold of a new millennium, Africans must pledge themselves to work for cancellation of unpayable debts, especially those stemming from militarist regimes, which "would give Africa an opportunity for a fresh start," he said. And then Africa must move to "ensure that funds released from debt are channeled towards economic projects" and develop strategies for sustainable development.

Ndungane repeated his urgent call for creation of an Economic Union of African States to coordinate economic development and assure that Africa would never again be marginalized or exploited. "It is time to move forward and to share the healthy, invigorating air of Africa with a world that has grown fatigued with old values," he concluded. "Africa stands at a time where it can and must play a pivotal role in influencing the next millennium. And for that it must be freed from the last shackles of oppression that are holding it back—the yoke of international debt."

Breaking bonds of debt

A second voice from Africa, a theologian and economist from Tanzania, was just as blunt. The Rev. Fidon Mwombeki denounced the World Bank and IMF as "unfriendly agents of imperialism which were neither created nor work for us" While admitting that it was "unprecedented" for the World Bank and IMF to even consider debt cancellation, he said, "We want to repudiate them, to say enough is enough. We are pushing our governments to disengage themselves from these tyrants. Our people have suffered for too long under their domination. Their prescriptions for economic reform," he said, "are grossly preposterous and grotesque."

Calling most of the debts "illegitimate," he said, "We can no longer snatch food from the mouths of children to pay the debt."

Mwombeki described how difficult it was to return home to Tanzania after five years of study in the United States and "see columns of young boys and girls walking five miles to school early in the morning... to see endless funerals in villages where children die of malnutrition and malaria because they cannot afford medical user fees imposed by the IMF and World Bank... to see roads dilapidated, telephones which do not work, underweight pregnant mothers giving birth to underweight children without access to medical care."

He concluded, "After years of being their humiliated good boys, our economies are poorer, our people more illiterate, our savings lower, our children without hope, our industries closed, our good institutions sold to foreigners at give-away prices, our governments more indebted and unable to control even dangerous products banned elsewhere." He added, "We want our money back—and you know where it is."

Later during a question-and-answer period, he said, "It is humiliating to beg. Nobody wants to be dependent. But there is no chance for freedom unless the chains of debt bondage are broken."

Both Mwombeki and Ndungane endorsed Jubilee 2000, an international campaign calling for cancellation of the burden of debt in the developing world and a new, more cooperative, economic order, based on the biblical vision from Leviticus 25.

Taking action

After working in small groups, participants met in a plenary to hammer out elements of a strategy to address issues of trade, aid and debt. A final statement, "Toward economic justice in Africa: A kairos moment for American policy," argued that economic systems have favored the few "to the destruction of many others. Greed seems to be at the basis of this oppressive system, producing massive poverty clearly recognizable in the problems of disease, hunger, illiteracy, violence, death, crime and immorality."

The statement urged a broadened definition of "neighbor to that of a universal neighbor, beyond our immediate kin, local community, ethnic group and nationality" as a way to affirm interdependence as a vision of community. "If we are all created in God's image, then the denial of dignity to any undermines the vision of true community," it said.

At the heart of the debt issue, it said, is "imbalance of power" and it is crucial to create mechanisms to prevent similar patterns in the future. "Countries have repaid the equivalent value of the original loans, including the principal and interest, many times over. Creditors must recognize that much of the remaining debt is morally odious." It further endorsed Ndungane's idea of a mediation council as a mechanism to build a different economic order.

The real issue for the church at this point is "how to be a prophetic voice in dealing with economic justice for Africa," said the Rev. Leon Spencer, an Episcopalian who is director of the Washington Office on Africa. He said that the stories shared in the small groups revealed the "human realities" of the difficult issues. While it is important to deal with specific legislation before Congress, "We are not here to take a stand" but to work towards a plan of action that expresses the church's prophetic role.

--James Solheim is director of the Office of News and Information for the Episcopal Church.

99-094

Consultation presses for recognition of ministry by all baptized

by James Solheim

(ENS) Hundreds of people descended on a college campus in southern Minnesota June 9 to press the church for a broader recognition of the ministry of all baptized Christians, based on the Baptismal Covenant.

Part rally, part reunion, part political strategy consultation, participants in the "Living the Covenant" consultation at St. Olaf College in Northfield were welcomed by Fred Putnam, the retired bishop of Minnesota, who expressed incredulity that the planners' hopes for 200 had swelled to over 450 and many had to be turned away.

The consultation was the "long-held dream" of the Rev. Boone Porter, said the Rev. Juan Oliver of Associated Parishes, one of the sponsors. Porter, who chaired the planning committee, died days before the meeting convened but his spirit clearly infused the proceedings, largely because of his conviction that "how you worship profoundly determines how you do mission," said Oliver.

In his keynote address on the renewal of ministry, Prof. Timothy Sedgwick of Virginia Seminary said that Porter was "a central character" in the development of the concept of "total ministry," one of the "visionaries and collaborators" who passionately believed that those qualities "remain essential to the deepening of our faith and the development of ministry."

In offering an "aerial view" of the developing concept of total or collaborative ministry in the last 25 years, Sedgwick quoted the late bishop of Nevada, Wes Frensdorff, who described an "emerging church" as one "where there is no clerical status of Christians and no classes of Christians" but a church where "all together know themselves to be part of the laos—the holy people of God."

That church, Frensdorff and others believed, would be "a ministering community rather than a community gathered around a minister" Clergy would be present "for the sake of ordering and signing the church's life and mission, not as signs of authority or dependency, nor of spiritual or intellectual superiority." Clergy, including bishops, would support a pattern of "ministry supporting church," building a servant church that would be "so salty and so yeasty that it really would be missed if no longer around," in Frensdorff's vision.

Congregation core of ministry

The vision seeks to "draw us back from a clericalized, institutionalized church seeking its own self-preservation," Sedgwick added. And baptism is the crucial initiation into that community of faith. "Ministry is then not something the ordained do or that which is done for the sake of the church," he said. "Ministry is the life of faith lived out in the world." The development of ministry must therefore deal with what is needed to "make this understanding a reality—what needs to be changed in the governance and canons, in liturgy and worship, in opportunities for service, in education and formation, in the role of the ordained, and in spirituality so that the connections are made and life in relationship with God is deepened," Sedgwick said.

He used the development of ministry in Alaska as a case study where Bishop Bill Gordon became "increasingly aware of paternalism and the need for truly indigenous

leadership," taking steps that created a new system in the church, one where local faith communities "bore their own life in faith, where leaders from the community were raised and supported to serve the common life of the community." The direct result was the ordination of 32 persons identified by their own communities as leaders. "The dramatic character of the change was marked by the increasing sense and claim that the church in its life and ministry was the congregation," Sedgwick said.

Gordon's vision of what is now called total ministry developed and spread to other dioceses because "systemic changes in the church were made of a sufficiently large scale that the organization, structure and vision of the church was itself changed," Sedgwick observed. It broadened the church's understanding of authority and leadership, education and training and the understanding of the role of the congregation and it spread as a movement.

An originating vision

While on a trip to southeast Asia, Boone Porter was introduced to the writings of Roland Allen, who offered "a theology of the Holy Spirit and the church which challenged as it inspired critical and constructive thinking and action about the church and ministry," as Sedgwick described his impact. Central to Allen's missionary strategy was a church that is "self-extending, self-governing and self-supporting because these characteristics arise from the nature of Christian faith." Allen supplies what Sedgwick called "an originating vision for the development of ministry" as it emerged in Alaska and elsewhere.

That vision was substantially supported by the liturgical renewal movement because "the understanding of Christian faith, the church and ministry at the heart of the liturgical movement provided the vision and language central to developments of total ministry," especially the importance of baptism and its place "at the center of the Christian life while the Eucharist was understood as expressing what was central to that life."

The liturgical movement provided "the language of baptismal covenant and the subsequent framework for developing understandings of ministry and holy orders that critically enlarged and extended the development of the movement of total ministry from its beginnings in Alaska with the originating vision of Roland Allen."

A channel of fire and wind?

Expanding on Sedgwick's observations, the Rev. Charles Wilson pointedly asked in his keynote on The Order and Exercise of Authority in the Church, "Can we come up with a vision of the church as a truly awesome channel of the fire and wind of God's authority?"

In exploring the concepts of leadership, authority and structure and how they function in the church, he began by contending that "there are too many people who equate leadership with control." But this is "very nearly the opposite of true leadership," because a leader is "one who inspires and unites the corporate effort with a powerful vision and then keeps the people free to pursue that vision in their own God-given creativity. In other words, the leader gets out of the way, fully expecting to be surprised and delighted in what happens," he said.

Wilson said that authority is "power that is recognized and accepted by the organization... power blessed or found acceptable or right to the community, as distinct from coercive power or the naked force of the bully." Using the Gospel of Matthew to express his concept of authority, he said that "all true authority is God's authority. It has nothing to do with status, corner office, orders, titles or vestments." And we must recognize that "there is a gracious abundance of authority blossoming all over the place, in ways that often surprise and delight us." A good theology of authority will "encourage such freedom and the enjoyment of seeing the freedom of others, as gifted people of faith, shining forth with God's power."

Structures, Wilson concluded, should “keep people free so they can take up their ministries according to their gifts and the call of the Spirit.”

How are ministers formed?

In the third keynote, Deacon Susanne Watson of Iowa said that her excitement about the consultation revolved around the questions, “What if all the organizations that have ‘ministry’ somehow as their focus all came together in one place? What if there were an opportunity for all the ministers of the church to gather and talk about how it is that we’re redefining, how we’re reclaiming the meaning of ministry?”

As a member of the board for the North American Association for the Diaconate (NAAD) and the planning committee for the consultation, Watson explored her concern for how the church forms people “to move into ministry and orders, particularly through worship, spiritual development, education and training.”

The true value of the meeting, she argued, was in the individuals with different perspectives, “bringing different eccentricities and gifts, all concerned about what we do with the rest of our lives after rising from the waters of baptism.” And yet all share an interest in “moving away from a consumer-provider approach to being the church, moving away from being communities gathered around a minister to ministering communities.”

Workshops express range of interests

Dozens of workshops catered to the interests of participants, addressing a wide range of theological and practical issues.

In a forum sponsored by Associated Parishes, for example, Bishop Mark MacDonald of Alaska picked up on the missionary vision of Roland Allen, suggesting that it stemmed from his frustration with the meager results of mission efforts in light of the promise. Allen concluded that something was terribly wrong—that missionaries themselves were prevented from hearing their own Gospel because of “hidden assumptions and cultural barriers.” Unfortunately, MacDonald, asserted, “It hasn’t changed a bit.”

As evidence he pointed out that the “number and participation of ethnic minorities is going down and the overall picture has been bleak,” largely because “the hidden assumption is superiority of those who bring the message.” He concluded, “The Gospel is greater than what we intend... and the one who thinks he brings the Gospel turns out to be the one who needs it.”

The church is back

“The church is back but most people don’t know it yet,” said Arianna Williams, a young woman from Nebraska. For her the conference was a hopeful sign. Others were encouraged by the return of what they called “heart-based theology.” Another said it was about time the church addressed “clericalism as oppression” and an obstacle to total ministry.

Several observed that the consultation represented “a series of movements joining hands” to build a more open and responsive church. What they share is a determination to claim the role and identity of lay people and to “dismantle some of the tyrannies of ordination.”

Bishop Tom Ray of Northern Michigan said in his sermon at the Eucharist that the church is in trouble if it expects “exaggerated saintly witness” from the one percent of its ordained membership and “zip” from the other 99 percent. “Is it any wonder the Episcopal Church is experiencing a deep malaise, paralysis?” he asked.

Ray said that “all the baptized find it difficult, if not impossible, to see deep significance in the lives of all and each of us. We really believe that the seminary-trained and ordained are the real serious Christians, even though we do know better.” Too often “low

self-esteem” among lay church members interferes with ministry. “Is it any wonder the church turns many people off, turns many away?”

He stressed that “servant ministry is not the domain, the territory, of the ordained. Servant ministry is how we care for our family. It reaches out and deeply into being a public servant....” A shift in understanding of ministry, what Ray called an “antidote to the paralysis of clericalism and anti-clericalism infecting the body of Christ,” is called Mutual Ministry in his diocese but “would better be called the recovery or the revelation of mutual baptismal ministry.”

Glimpse of the future

The Rev. Melford Holland, whose Office for Ministry Development also supported the consultation, described it as a “wonderful new meeting group” that brought together a variety of perspectives. “It is a bit like tossing seeds on the ground—no one knows what will grow,” he said. And yet he sensed tremendous power in the stories that were shared and the enduring connections that were forged.

“We got a glimpse of the future,” Holland said, “people coming together from different perspectives around the issue of the ministry of the baptized and how we live out the Baptismal Covenant in our daily lives.”

The Rev. Ben Helmer, director of the church’s Ministry with Small Churches said that “this consultation demonstrated how much energy there is around collaborative ministry development in churches of every size.” He said that the meeting also demonstrated “a pressing need for information about collaborative ministry and how to go about it.”

In a closing session, participants were clearly looking for ways to extend the connections, to “build on the commonality of what we are doing.” One person said that the meeting “brought the fires together.” One suggested that participants look for ways to meet on a regional or diocesan level. In a flash of reality, someone else wondered “where are the other groups committed to total ministry, like the conservatives and charismatics? There are more friends out there.”

--James Solheim is director of the Episcopal Church’s Office of News and Information.

99-095

Consultation tackles baffling array of issues in biomedical ethics

by Ed Stannard

(Episcopal Life) If you could take a test that would tell you that you would contract a non-curable, terminal disease and die a horrible death before age 65, would you want to know? What if there was a procedure to alter your genes to prevent the disease--would you have it done? What if you conceived and could have the embryo treated to avoid getting it? And what should the church say about these issues?

The first question is a real one for those at risk of Huntington’s disease, a hereditary brain disease that causes intellectual deterioration, and loss of emotional control, balance and speech, leading inevitably to death. The second and third options may be a reality in the near future.

The gene that causes Huntington’s has been found (it’s on chromosome 4) and research is being done on treatments for genetic diseases.

The last question isn't an easy one to answer--these are excruciatingly complicated questions--but members of the church are indeed tackling them.

On June 8-9, the Presiding Bishop's Consultation on Biomedical Ethics was held at the College of Preachers in Washington, D.C., bringing together theologians, ethicists, doctors and others who see technologies such as gene therapy, cloning and artificial reproductive techniques as issues that the church must address.

Infringing on God's prerogatives

"A first question about our remarkable new powers over nature is whether or when use of [such therapies] represents an act of hubris, an infringement on God's prerogatives," said David Smith, director of the Poynter Center for the Study of Ethics and American Institutions at Indiana University. "Do these technologies represent a movement of human agency into areas that should be left in God's hands?"

Smith delivered the major paper of the consultation, in which he reviewed the theological issues involved in bioethics. Smith outlined three ways of approaching the issues, based on the work of Max Stackhouse:

- An Augustinian approach, which is extremely cautious about human intervention in God's creation. Under this model, therapies to cure disease may be appropriate, but those that seek to improve mankind, such as "cures" for short stature, are likely to be frowned upon.
- An approach in which it is our duty to try to improve our life, understanding our limits and our relationship to God as God's creatures.
- A progressive approach, which "rejects as superstition the idea that there are intrinsic limits to what we should do to improve the human prospect. Knowledge and skill are meant to be used to improve the world, and that fact is to be celebrated."

Each of these models has its pros and cons, according to Smith. For example, the middle view must wrestle with the problem of which "unnatural" processes to allow: "Say genetic treatments are acceptable for therapy but not for enhancement? Where is that line to be drawn?"

To a conservative Christian ethicist, donor gametes, surrogate mothers and cloning "are all problematical because they break the link between the social bond of marriage and the biological process of reproduction." But, on the other hand, this fails to take into account the real issues of infertility--and gay couples, as well. "Parenthood easily becomes an idol," said Smith.

While not claiming a place in the progressive school, which he said speaks the language of rights, Smith agreed that the idea that "the key eligibility requirement anyone must meet is desire and willingness to parent ... gets at something profoundly right. We all know of situations, beginning with the Holy Family, in which unusual parenting arrangements have led to happy homes and wonderful children."

Dangerous knowledge

Smith also discussed whether too much knowledge is a dangerous thing in some circumstances, using as an example Huntington's disease and the genetic test available to determine whether a person is at risk (a child of a Huntington's sufferer has a 50 percent chance of inheriting the disease).

"In fact, the majority of persons at risk for HD have chosen not to be tested," Smith noted. "They prefer an uncertain future to the risk of learning a bleak prognosis. For them, knowledge is a threat, not a promise. They prefer to keep this scientific knowledge as a forbidden truth."

Smith continued to discuss the church's role: "Genetic knowledge can be threatening; it can also contribute to a legacy of guilt. ... Thus, the church must be prepared to help people wrestle with the question of how much—if any—knowledge they are obliged to acquire." The questions include the impact on family members and future generations.

The church's role

Another of the consultation's speakers, the Rev. Ellen Wondra of Bexley Hall Seminary in Rochester, N.Y., discussed theological issues involved in counseling persons with fertility issues or genetic diseases. She emphasized that people must be assured that their disappointments and suffering have nothing to do with sin.

"Sin presumes consequences to the disruption of relationship with God--we view it as punishment or correction. Suffering a negative experience of pain, loss, loss of meaning, shattering of trust--it hurts. Suffering matters. ... There is no doubt that people in these situations suffer."

But she warned that individual suffering is not the sole concern, and terminating a pregnancy to forestall having a child with a genetic anomaly is not always the right answer. For example, "Part of what makes living with a child with Down syndrome difficult is the absence or withdrawal of resources of understanding and support on the part of others." It is in such circumstances that the church should take a role.

"Part of the suffering that people experience comes from how they are treated by others," said Wondra. "It's called affliction and we can remove most of this suffering; and if we do not, then we need to talk about sin and redemption." Wondra said another way the church can help is to teach people how to reflect theologically "well before a critical situation arises."

Dean James Lemler of Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Ill., also called for more spiritual formation. "How do we as communities of faith provide a means of moral discernment?" he asked. Ultimately, after science has accomplished what it can, people must know they are loved, Lemler said, and they must know that love is "immeasurable, inestimable, grand, broad and strong."

--Ed Stannard is news editor of *Episcopal Life* where this article originally appeared.

99-096

Agencies study ways to help refugees ponder their return to Kosovo

by Kathryn McCormick

(ENS) The agencies that have been wrestling for months with the care and resettlement of refugees streaming out of Kosovo are confronting a new problem: How to help the refugees return home.

As Episcopal Migration Ministries continued to settle some Kosovars in new homes across the United States, EMM Director Richard Parkins flew to Macedonia to visit the camps where thousands of refugees had been gathered immediately after they had fled or were forced from their homes.

The NATO security force was being deployed in Kosovo, Parkins said after the June 9-13 visit, and relief officials were occupied with efforts to safely return refugees to that area.

"We found the refugees in fairly good condition," he said, "a result of a great deal of NGO [non-governmental organization] humanitarian assistance." He noted particularly Catholic Relief Services, which manages the first of two camps visited by the group representing four of the nine agencies designated by the U.S. State Department to resettle refugees in the U.S.

Parkins described the camp, Stankovac 1, as hot and desolate, as was the second camp the group visited, Cegrane. Together, the camps were housing 62,000 people. The group also met with a refugee family sheltered by host families in the Gostavari municipality.

"Most refugees are eager to return home," Parkins said, "but they are weighing the prospects of doing so any time soon. It was fairly clear to our group that the resettlement abroad options should continue to be made available given the number who are likely to find returning to Kosovo impossible."

He noted that "there are also other vulnerable refugees such as women at risk and severe medical cases where resettlement abroad could make the difference in returning to a more whole life."

The group later recommended that:

- Given the security risks—such as the presence of land mines—in Kosovo, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees must work to see that refugees are fully informed before they decide to return home. The option to resettle in other countries must be kept open for those refugees who will find it impossible to return.
- The government of Macedonia should be commended for its efforts to help refugees and should receive economic aid to offset the costs of hosting the refugees. The UN and humanitarian agencies should plan for winterization of the refugee camps if substantial numbers of refugees are unable to leave them. These plans should include providing for schools.
- The U.S. must work with agencies at the camps to clarify the ways in which it can help refugees with special needs, such as severe medical conditions. Confusion resulted in some refugees being refused resettlement because those doing preliminary paperwork for them did not realize that they were eligible for aid.
- The U.S. resettlement agencies should keep considering the cases of refugees seeking help in the camps and should do more effective outreach to inform refugees of the resettlement options available.

Meanwhile, in a separate meeting shortly before the Macedonian visit, 40 church leaders and high-ranking officials across Europe and North America agreed to make the Balkans a major focus for aid, development and relationship-building to repair the devastation of the decade-long conflict in that region.

The consultation, held in Budapest in late May, was organized by the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches in cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The Ecumenical Council of Churches in Hungary hosted the event. Representatives of these organizations were invited, along with officials from Yugoslavia's main churches, churches in NATO countries and churches in the Balkans and Eastern Europe.

The agreement echoed the recommendation of another ecumenical group, including representatives of the WCC, that visited refugee camps and churches in Albania and Macedonia and called for large-scale church aid in the region.

Both groups stressed the complexity of the situation in the Balkans and the need to focus aid on areas beyond immediate help for refugees.

--Kathryn McCormick is associate director of the Office of News and Information of the Episcopal Church.

99-097

Bishop Donovan will serve interim in Diocese of New Jersey

(ENS) The Standing Committee of the Diocese of New Jersey announced May 26 that it had “unanimously and enthusiastically” called Bishop Herbert A. Donovan Jr. to serve as assisting bishop in the diocese, effective June 1. After his 1993 retirement as bishop of Arkansas, he was vicar of Trinity Church in Manhattan and then interim bishop of Chicago. He is currently serving as coordinator of the College of Bishops, which meets annually at the General Theological Seminary in New York. He was secretary of the House of Bishops for 12 years.

“It is the expectation of the Standing Committee that in January we will have an assisting bishop in place who will be with us until the election of a new diocesan bishop,” said the letter from the Rev. George Willis, Jr., president of the committee. Under an agreement with Bishop Joe Morris Doss, who resigned as bishop of New Jersey on March 12, the diocese will not elect until that resignation takes effect in the fall of 2001.

99-098

Dioceses of Rochester and Connecticut elect bishops

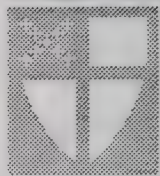
(ENS) Two diocesan bishops were elected at conventions held on June 19. Bishop Jack McKelvey was chosen bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of Rochester on June 19. McKelvey, who currently is suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Newark, edged ahead of the Rev. Canon Gene Robinson of New Hampshire on the fifth ballot at the convention at St. Thomas' Church in Bath, New York.

The three other candidates included the Rev. Canon Mark Scheneman of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, the Rev. David Selzer of the Diocese of Western New York and the Very Rev. Gladstone “Skip” Adams III of the Diocese of Central New York.

Attention was focused on the election because Robinson, canon to the ordinary in New Hampshire, is an openly gay priest. He finished third in the balloting last year for diocesan bishop of Newark—McKelvey was second.

In Connecticut, Bishop Andrew D. Smith was elected diocesan bishop on the second ballot from a slate of six candidates. He is currently bishop suffragan in the diocese.

Other candidates included the Rev. Leander S. Harding and the Rev. E. Bevan Stanley, both of the Diocese of Connecticut; the Rev. Canon John E. Kitagawa of the Diocese of Maryland; the Rev. Martyn Minns of the Diocese of Virginia, and the Rev. Leslie C. Smith of the Diocese of New Jersey.



news digest

99-087D

Executive Council plans for future, proposes Minneapolis for General Convention in 2003

(ENS) The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, meeting for the first time in the Diocese of Fond du Lac in Wisconsin, continued its work on a budget process, laid plans for new program initiatives in preparation for next summer's General Convention, and proposed Minneapolis as the site for the 2003 convention.

In the opening plenary on June 14, House of Deputies president Pamela Chinnis reported that she had been "energized" in her meetings with the church on the local level, that it was "refreshing" to meet church members who were concerned with "how to live a Christian life in today's world.

Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold reported on his own encounters with the church in recent months. He said that the recent meeting of the bishops in Texas revealed continuing attempts by the bishops to serve as "a community of wisdom" for the whole church." Despite "some tensions among certain bishops," he is convinced that they are in a "good, solid place" and want to work together on the issues facing the church.

The Zacchaeus Report, now being sent to all congregations by the Episcopal Church Foundation, is a "careful sampling" of how people at the local level view their church. It reveals broad recognition that the church is alive and well and doing effective ministry, especially in dealing with differences, he said. It also reveals some "real concern about how decisions are made," he added. But it is clear that "Episcopalians find their identity through worship—the Eucharist is central to their lives."

Griswold said that a recent meeting of the board of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief endorsed a capital funds drive to celebrate its 60th anniversary and will study how the drive can best be "integrated" into the life of the church.

Following a trip to Washington, where he met with Congressional leaders as well as representatives of the World Bank and civil rights advocates, Griswold issued a statement urging them to address the issue of world debt and the heavy burden it places on developing nations (see statement in Newsfeatures). The conversations in Washington also raised questions about his own role in public affairs.

Council members, under the leadership of the planning and evaluation committee, engaged in small group discussions about the future program of the church. As a result they urged programs to promote diversity, expand the capacity for communication and develop

leadership for the future, without affecting the church's emphasis on or support for global mission and programs in peace and justice.

Treasurer Stephen Duggan reported that national income is "quite strong," and that 70 percent of the dioceses are pledging at or above the requested formula. The council continued to develop a more flexible and responsive budget process, one that Duggan has been advocating during the triennium. Griswold urged the council not to start with budgets, because that too often highlights scarcities, but to look first at mission and then the monetary resources. He quoted the late Cardinal Suenens of Belgium who said, "The trouble with the church is that it lives with such low expectations."

The council endorsed plans for a new network of all the groups involved in world mission into an Episcopal Partnership for Global Mission, to provide "greater coherence in the midst of some confusion," said the Rev. Titus Presler of Massachusetts in his presentation on behalf of the planners. The network would address "some misunderstanding and even some competition" and attempt to overcome distinctions between what are often perceived as official and unofficial mission efforts, he said.

The council commended the presiding bishop and staff for its diplomatic initiatives and humanitarian efforts in the Balkan crisis and pledged to support continuing attempts by the religious community to seek healing and reconciliation. Richard Parkins, fresh from visiting refugee camps in Macedonia, described those efforts to support refugees and seek their return to Kosovo.

The council also urged Congress to pass comprehensive gun control legislation, restricting access to firearms by children by stiffening background checks for purchases. It recommended a response to gun violence at next summer's General Convention.

--by James Solheim

99-084D

Presiding Bishop urges Congress to pass debt relief bill

(ENS) Citing the biblical call for Jubilee and the Episcopal Church's ministry to the poor, Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold has urged Congress to support a bill that would bring debt relief to the world's poorest countries.

"I believe this bill fulfills a difficult task," he said in testimony submitted to the House Committee on Banking and Financial Services. "It offers a Jubilee vision of debt relief, moving the United States into a position of world leadership on this issue." He added that the bill also "lifts up" the call for debt relief issued by last summer's Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops "to genuinely benefit the poor by creating sophisticated mechanisms for poverty reduction, accountability, and good governance."

Griswold's three-page statement was a result of two days of meetings with what he called "a very diverse group" of leaders from government and international organizations in Washington, D.C. Griswold said that he was encouraged by conversations about "public service as a form of ministry."

After meeting with Rep. James A. Leach (R-Iowa), chair of the committee, the presiding bishop was invited to testify on the proposed Debt Relief and Poverty Act of 1999 currently before Congress. Since he had to chair the Executive Council meeting in

Wisconsin, preventing him from attending the bill's June 15 committee hearing, Griswold sent a statement to the committee.

The bill, sponsored by Leach and Rep. John LaFalce (D-New York), would cancel most debt owed to the United States by heavily-indebted poor countries and reduce debt owed by these countries to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other international financial institutions.

It also would require each country aided through the bill to establish a human development fund dedicated to reducing the number of persons living in poverty, expanding access of the poorest members of society to basic social services and preventing the degradation of the environment. The legislation would expand the number of eligible countries from the current 29 to 45.

In his testimony, Griswold told the committee that debt relief had been a chief topic of concern at last summer's Lambeth Conference, the once-a-decade meeting of all the bishops of the worldwide Anglican Communion. He noted that the 750 bishops at the conference eventually adopted without dissent a statement calling for the cancellation of unpayable debts of poor countries and for more responsible action from debtor and creditor countries, governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

With that as background, Griswold pointed to two concerns that undergirded his statement supporting debt relief.

First is Jubilee 2000, the worldwide movement for debt relief inspired by the biblical texts in Leviticus 25, in which God told Moses that vineyards and fields must be allowed to rest and recuperate every seventh year. Further, every 50th year should be a Jubilee Year in which the land is allowed to lie fallow, slaves are set free, land returned to its original owners, and debts canceled.

"The essence of Jubilee is related to suspending patterns—patterns of work, patterns of domination, patterns of acquisition," Griswold said.

The second concern, he said, is combating poverty.

"For me, for the Anglican bishops, and for most advocates for debt relief, the reality that overwhelming debts push the poorest members of our earth deeper and deeper into poverty is cause to take action. These poor countries are caught in a cycle of debt they cannot escape, borrowing more money to make payments on old debts," he said.

Servicing debt can take up to 40 percent of a poor country's budget, takes money away from much-needed human development, education and environmental projects and sends it to rich donor nations, he said. —by **Kathryn McCormick**

99-89D

Episcopal Communicators meet at Sewanee, honor best work of past year

(ENS) The annual meeting of Episcopal Communicators at the University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee, May 26-30, was a high-spirited mix of speakers, workshops and awards for the best work of the last year. The theme was "Feeding the Soul, Mind and Body."

After morning meditations by Bishop Robert Tharp, the retired bishop of East Tennessee, the 140 communicators registered for the conference waded into workshops

dealing with writing, design and advertising, but also including working with clay and exploring caves in the area.

Among the 155 awards given to newspapers, magazines, specialized print, and electronic media, the top awards for general excellence went to *Journal of Women's Ministries* in the magazine category, with *The Witness* and *Anglican World* receiving awards of merit; *Anglican Advance*, Diocese of Chicago, was the top newspaper with a circulation above 12,000, with *Maryland Church News* winning an award of merit; there was a tie for award of merit for newspapers under 12,000 between the *Record*, Diocese of Michigan, and *Trinity*, the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

In the category for agency newspapers, *Episcopal Life* received the award of excellence and *Kanuga News* the award of merit. (A complete list of awards is available on-line at www.dfms.org/communicators/pollybond/1999polly.html).

Noted author and civil rights activist Will Campbell was not only the keynote speaker but his irascible spirit and quick wit infused the whole meeting.

Describing himself as "a low church Baptist" who was an Episcopalian "briefly--but it didn't work," Campbell said he came from "a long line of hell-raisers." Despite some recent health problems, his interactions with participants demonstrated that his spirit and his opinions are still strong.

Campbell began by exploring the state of moral leadership today, urging "less self-righteousness and a degree of humility" in our national political life. He blasted the death penalty and argued that "we invented ethnic cleansing, for God's sake—and it does work. We built an empire on it," pointing to the treatment of the American Indian as a startling example. And he wondered if that piece of our history "is still on the nation's conscience."

While working with the National Council on race relations he concluded that "this nation was founded on violence—racial violence." Campbell's most recent book is "*And Also with You—Duncan Gray and the American Dilemma*," the story of an Episcopal bishop's struggle against racial segregation in Mississippi.

"What is the purpose of the church press?" asked the Rev. David Moore of Sewanee in his sermon at the conference Eucharist. "What are the stories you write, the articles that make a difference—what is your task, your purpose?"

He suggested some possibilities. "You tell the stories of our life together, our ministries, our struggles, our foibles, our joys... You are conduits of information, sources, insight and analysis. You are interpreters and guides... On occasion you adopt a prophetic distance, a prophetic stance over against institutional structures."

Moore said that he looks for hope in communications from the church. "I look for encouragement and, at the same time, the challenge of passion for justice and righteousness which moves through the heart of another. I look for witness of God's activity, God's grace, God's compassion, lived out in the lives of people, congregations and communities. It is absolutely vital that we hear these stories of God's movement, stirring God's people to share in God's loving action."

He ended by warning that, because the church's communicators "see the best and the worst of the church, disillusionment, cynicism and despair are frequent companions. And your role of telling the truth brings you up against unfair structures and self-serving people all too frequently. Seek the things that give you life, that give you joy...."

Herb Gunn of Michigan, president of Episcopal Communicators, said that the organization "has been knocking on the door of the church for 25 years" but there is still some confusion over the role of communicators in the church. Yet he reported that the organization would make a presentation to the House of Bishops meeting in September.

"We want to help the church tell its story," Gunn said, "to share the Good News—even if it is bad news. And we want to challenge the church to recognize the value of what we do." He suggested that members work toward a goal of 10 percent of diocesan budgets set aside for communication.—by **James Solheim**

99-090D

Construction begins on Honduran houses sponsored by the Presiding Bishop's Fund

(ENS) With an impressive ground-breaking ceremony, construction began in June on the first house in "Faith, Hope and Joy: A Project for Living," the Honduran housing project sponsored by the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief.

"We were very pleased that so many officials were present for the ceremony," said Abigail Nelson, the fund's coordinator for the project, which is located near San Pedro Sula. She noted that the vice-president of Honduras, Juan Bendeck, headed a local delegation that also included regional leaders and the head of the local Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Equally important was the presence of all the Anglican bishops of Central America, with the exception of Sturdy Downs of Nicaragua, who was unable to attend, Nelson said.

"We discussed possible programs for the rest of Latin America," she said, "and all the bishops have agreed to try to give the fund proposals in the next few months for ongoing projects."

Nelson said the fund also was pleased by the presence of reporters from *La Prensa*, Honduras' national newspaper, and from CNN Latin America.

The first three-year phase of "Faith, Hope and Joy" will include construction of 95 houses, to be built by volunteers from the Episcopal Church and the families who will make the houses their homes. The families have lived in temporary quarters since the country was devastated by Hurricane Mitch last October. The fund hopes eventually to build a total of 500 houses.

"The response we've had from the church has been tremendous," Nelson said of the call for volunteers. For example, during the two weeks following the ground-breaking ceremony, she said, she received nearly 80 requests from groups and individuals seeking information about volunteering. She is already signing people up to work during the summer of 2000, she said.

The Diocese of Washington and the South American Missionary Society (SAMS) also are sponsoring major house-building projects. --by **Kathryn McCormick**

99-086D

Zacchaeus survey confirms a Church energy source—its congregations

(ENS) What does it mean to be an Episcopalian at the end of the second Millennium?

The report of an ambitious survey of church members has found that Episcopalians are committed to worship and the Anglican tradition that binds them; that many of the church's local congregations are characterized by a healthy sense of vitality and common mission, and that many congregations share a commitment to be inclusive.

At the same time, Episcopalians seem to yearn for more support from and a better relationship with the church's diocesan and national structures, which, some church members said, have not adapted well to the increasing role of laity in the church over recent decades.

The report, copies of which were mailed in late June to every parish in the Episcopal Church, is an important step in the Zacchaeus Project, which was commissioned by the Episcopal Church Foundation as a gift to the church to mark the foundation's 50th anniversary this year. The research was conducted by Cornerstone, a ministry of the foundation.

The project actually began last year with detailed interviews of some 2,000 Episcopalians in nine dioceses selected to reflect the diversity of the whole church. Parishes churchwide are now being asked to discuss the report, which will be the focus of a Trinity Institute teleconference in September. More churchwide teleconferences will be held through May 2000.

The Zacchaeus Project "is a work in progress," foundation president George Fowlkes said in a letter accompanying the report. He emphasized that the report, while presenting the answers gathered in many interviews, has drawn no definitive conclusions. The project, he said, is an "overall effort to stage a national conversation about our life together."

The project was launched with the encouragement and support of Presiding Bishop Frank T. Griswold, who noted in a statement, "The report bears out what I have observed myself over these last months: parishes are healthy and grounded in their worship. Thus grounded, we are moving out from our church communities and into our neighborhoods to respond to the needs as we find them. Our relationship with the Risen Christ has called us into relationship with all of God's people."

The report notes that the Zacchaeus Project was commissioned last year, the first year of Griswold's nine-year term as presiding bishop and a point at the end of one millennium and the beginning of another. The project was named for the biblical character, described in Luke 19, who climbed a sycamore tree to gain a better look at Jesus.

The research was directed by an Episcopal lay person and sociologist, Thomas P. Holland of the University of Georgia, and a parish priest and historian, William L. Sachs, rector of St. Matthew's Church in Wilton, Connecticut.

Five interviewers spoke with about 2,000 Episcopalians in 250 individual or focus group meetings representing nearly 5 percent of Episcopal congregations. Dioceses chosen for the research included Central Florida, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Texas, West Missouri, Kansas, Minnesota, Nevada and Los Angeles.

In addition to speaking with lay people in those dioceses, the interviewers met with focus groups of seminarians, clergy, young adults and residents of an Episcopal retirement community.

At the core of Episcopal identity, the report said, are the Book of Common Prayer and the liturgy. "Over 95 percent of respondents in both independent surveys and interviews agreed that the Eucharist, liturgy, and the Prayer Book were central to the lives of their congregations," the report emphasized.

Spiritual growth, and the sense of being on a spiritual journey together, were important to many congregants, the report said.

"At a time when many Americans define themselves as spiritual seekers," it commented, "one of the Episcopal Church's attractions may be the extent of its openness to such a quest."

Not everyone agreed. "In a few sites," the report said, "participants voiced dismay over the Episcopal Church's tolerance for what they saw as too wide a range of views and beliefs. Some stances, such as denying the resurrection or advocating acceptance of homosexuality, fall outside the boundaries of the historic Christian faith, they stress, and Episcopal leadership has substituted political correctness for biblical truths."

Whether they feel they are sharing a spiritual journey or not, most Episcopalians in local congregations share a "profound sense of community [that] exists not for its own sake, and certainly not for the sake of institutional loyalty alone. Their calling to follow Christ together inspires a sense of shared mission," according to the report.

Leadership in these congregations is often seen as a responsibility shared by the clergy and the laity—an indication to the interviewers that "there has been a decisive shift in the Episcopal Church's life over the past half-century," according to the report. The place of ordained leaders—many congregants praised the work the clergy had done in their congregations—and of other bodies such as vestries remains intact, the report said, but "a broad and rather informal view of leadership has taken hold."

Even as they expressed their enthusiasm about their parish life, Episcopalians acknowledged that the demands of the current social environment are pressuring laity to increase their skills in leadership, pastoral care and mission, and they are looking to wider church structures for resources to meet these demands.

At this point, many noted their concerns about the capability of programs sponsored by diocesan and national offices to respond effectively.

The report added later, however, "Despite obvious ambivalence about the church's hierarchy, many of our respondents hoped to find ways to draw their locality into better partnership with it. The resilience of this hope should be a major source of encouragement for the Episcopal Church's professional leadership."

Copies of the 61-page report are available from Cornerstone at a cost of \$5 each. Requests may be made by phone (901) 527-1450, by fax (901) 523-8952 or by email cstone@mmem.net. The report is online at the Episcopal Church Foundation's Web site: www.episcopalfoundation.org. --by Kathryn McCormick

99-091D

Convocation of churches in Europe moves towards formation of diocese

(ENS) A consultation of the Convocation of American Churches in Europe has advocated formation of its eight parishes and five mission congregations into a diocese—and expressed determination to work with other Anglicans in Europe to form a new province of the Anglican Communion.

The May 7-9 consultation in Nice, France, also developed a mission plan that includes training centers for lay and ordained ministries, a youth ministry, additional mission churches and an effort to create multi-cultural European forms of Anglicanism.

In his letter of invitation to the Mission 2000 Consultation, Bishop Jeffery Rowthorn described the event as a sign of a “new missionary awareness” emerging in the parishes.

Last summer’s Lambeth Conference of the world’s Anglican bishops encouraged efforts to establish a new province in partnership with Anglicans in Spain and Portugal as a “multi-national, multi-lingual and multi-cultural Anglican fellowship within the New Europe.”

The convocation originated with parishes in several European cities catering to wealthy American expatriates, many of them chaplaincies. The American church provided a suffragan bishop to serve the loosely organized Convocation.

That ministry has broadened in recent years as people with mixed cultural and religious backgrounds have found a home under the broad tent of Anglicanism—including refugees and local Christians. Worship is now offered in French, Italian, Spanish and Chinese, as well as English. And the role of bishop has also expanded so that it is now a full-time position, still tied to the American church.

In his keynote address to the consultation, Prof. Ian Douglas of the Episcopal Divinity School in Massachusetts spoke of the need for Anglicanism to find an authentic European expression—not in order to advance Anglicanism itself, “but rather for the sake of restoring all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”

In his own address to the consultation, Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali of Rochester in the Church of England addressed the “shape of the church to come.” In examining the various forms the church has taken over the centuries, he agreed with Douglas that Anglicanism should find a distinctive European form to express its catholicity in an authentic way.

In its Statement of Mission Intent, the consultation said that the time is ripe for the “re-evangelization of Europe,” calling on the participation of all Christians. “We do not seek to convert Christians who are already faithful in another church, but rather to join with them in their witness to the power of the Gospel in modern societies which are dominantly secular and pluralistic,” the statement said.

--based on a press release written by Joe Britton, canon missionary to the bishop of the convocation and priest at a mission congregation in France.

99-092D

Archbishop of Canterbury warmly greeted by Anglicans in South America

(Episcopal Life) Archbishop George Carey of Canterbury, in a weeklong swing in late May through the Church of Brazil and the strongly evangelical Church of the Southern Cone, made a worldwide call to churches to throw open their doors to welcome strangers.

"We must welcome people, we must care for them, we must ensure they feel at home in our worship and that we relate our faith to the needs of people outside," he said. Carey visited the dioceses of Northern Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay. In Montevideo, Uruguay's capital, where he addressed the provincial synod, Carey warned that it is easy for the church to talk about mission, but fail to act on it.

He described "an innocent sign" on the porch of a church in his diocese that reads: "Keep this door firmly shut, sheep may enter." For too many years, this has been the unspoken view of many Anglican churches: This church is not for you; keep out," he said.

However, the Anglicans in the Southern Cone will not have female priests to continue the church's work--at least for now. A vote to permit dioceses to ordain women as priests failed to get the required two-thirds approval.

Two women deacons from Montevideo, who attended the synod, took Carey and his wife, Eileen, a nurse, to their ministry at an AIDS hospital. The archbishop laid hands on the patients and prayed with families during his visit. One of the deacons, Audrey Gonzales, originally a journalist from Tennessee, ministers to the English-speaking community at Holy Trinity Cathedral and at a home for the elderly.

In the Diocese of Northern Argentina, Carey seized an opportunity to talk with government officials about concerns shared by the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches over land rights of the indigenous people and urged compliance of agreements already reached but not yet enforced.

In Uruguay, Carey urged in his address to provincial synod that lay and ordained ministers prepare themselves to encounter diversity in the secular world and with other members of a worldwide Christian church. "This is something that Anglicanism has sometimes struggled to acknowledge, preferring to focus on the local and immediate.

"The days are gone when parochialism can work," he said. "What we do or say here can so easily be broadcast to the other side of the world within seconds. So I want to encourage outward-looking theological education that will strengthen the identity of this province and equip your people for the realities of the word and the church today."

Arriving by small plane at Ing Juez in the Chaco region of northern Argentina, Carey was greeted by a city that is 80 percent Anglican. More than 6,000 filled the city arena for a three-hour Festival of Praise.

--based on reports from the Anglican Communion News Service by Jim Rosenthal and the Latin American and Caribbean Communication Agency.

99-093D

Debt conference calls for 'fresh start' for Africa

(ENS) The voices were urgent—and angry, calling for the forgiveness of international debts owed by African nations to give them a “fresh start,” and also for a new economic order based on mutuality rather than exploitation.

An intense three-day consultation dealing with trade, aid, and debt drew a wide variety of people committed to economic justice for Africa, limited not just to experts but including students, former missionaries, government officials and church leaders.

Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town Njongonkulu Ndungane gave the keynote address for the June 4-6 consultation in a suburb of Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Washington Office on Africa and the Stony Point Conference Center.

Increasingly recognized as a leading spokesman for economic justice for his continent, the archbishop was blunt in calling for the “cancellation of unpayable debts as a first significant step towards a new economic beginning for the developing world, in particular Africa,” providing “a springboard to new hope, to a new dispensation of economic justice.”

Speaking to a crowd at the Cannon House Office Building, Ndungane traced the debt crisis, beginning with the liberation movements of the 1960s when leaders “grasped at economic lifelines thrown out by developed countries,” not aware that “they were being caught up in the net of foreign debt that would drag them further into a sea of poverty.”

As a result, he said, “millions of people in developing countries now live in abject poverty while a massive transfer of wealth takes place, from the people of the south to the industrialized nations of the north.” It is now estimated that Africa owes over \$227 billion to creditors, about \$400 for every man, woman and child on the continent, by some estimates.

“Poor countries are obliged by the International Monetary Fund and other representatives of rich creditor nations to prioritize debt payments and to do this by diverting funds from health, clean water, sanitation and human development,” Ndungane said. His call for a Mediation Council that would “establish legal principles and standards to govern international lending and borrowing,” was endorsed by last summer’s Lambeth Conference of the world’s Anglican and Episcopal bishops meeting in Canterbury, England.

While the gap widens between the rich and the poor nations, “Planet Earth rent asunder by such division and injustice is heading for shipwreck,” Ndungane warned. He added that “the single greatest scandal of our age” is the “massive transfer of resources from poorer countries to the wealthy, whether through debt repayments or the inequalities of global trade.”

A second voice from Africa, a theologian and economist from Tanzania, was just as blunt. The Rev. Fidon Mwombeki denounced the World Bank and IMF as “unfriendly agents of imperialism which were neither created nor work for us” While admitting that it was “unprecedented” for the World Bank and IMF to even consider debt cancellation, he said, “We want to repudiate them, to say enough is enough. We are pushing our governments to disengage themselves from these tyrants. Our people have suffered for too long under their domination. Their prescriptions for economic reform,” he said, are grossly preposterous and grotesque.”

Calling most of the debts “illegitimate,” he said, “We can no longer snatch food from the mouths of children to pay the debt.”

Later during a question-and-answer period, he said, "It is humiliating to beg. Nobody wants to be dependent. But there is no chance for freedom unless the chains of debt bondage are broken."

Both Mwombeki and Ndungane endorsed Jubilee 2000, an international campaign calling for cancellation of the burden of debt in the developing world and a new, more cooperative, economic order, based on the biblical vision from Leviticus 25.

After working in small groups, participants met in a plenary to hammer out elements of a strategy to address issues of trade, aid and debt. A final statement, "Toward economic justice in Africa: A kairos moment for American policy," argued that economic systems have favored the few "to the destruction of many others. Greed seems to be at the basis of this oppressive system, producing massive poverty clearly recognizable in the problems of disease, hunger, illiteracy, violence, death, crime and immorality."

The real issue for the church at this point is "how to be a prophetic voice in dealing with economic justice for Africa," said the Rev. Leon Spencer, an Episcopalian who is director of the Washington Office on Africa.—by **James Solheim**

99-094D

Consultation presses for recognition of ministry by all baptized

(ENS) Hundreds of people descended on a college campus in southern Minnesota June 9 to press the church for a broader recognition of the ministry of all baptized Christians, based on the Baptismal Covenant.

Part rally, part reunion, part political strategy consultation, participants in the "Living the Covenant" consultation at St. Olaf College in Northfield were welcomed by Fred Putnam, the retired bishop of Minnesota, who expressed incredulity that the planners hopes for 200 had swelled to over 450 and many had to be turned away.

In offering an "aerial view" of the developing concept of total or collaborative ministry in the last 25 years, Prof. Timothy Sedgwick of Virginia Seminary quoted the late bishop of Nevada, Wes Frensdorff, who described an "emerging church" as one "where there is no clerical status of Christians and no classes of Christians" but a church where "all together know themselves to be part of the laos—the holy people of God."

That church, Frensdorff and others believed, would be "a ministering community rather than a community gathered around a minister." Clergy would be present "for the sake of ordering and signing the church's life and mission, not as signs of authority or dependency, nor of spiritual or intellectual superiority." Clergy, including bishops, would support a pattern of "ministry supporting church," building a servant church that would be "so salty and so yeasty that it really would be missed if no longer around," in Frensdorff's vision.

That vision seeks to "draw us back from a clericalized, institutionalized church seeking its own self-preservation," Sedgwick added. And baptism is the crucial initiation into that community of faith. "Ministry is then not something the ordained do or that which is done for the sake of the church," he said. "Ministry is the life of faith lived out in the world." The development of ministry must therefore deal with what is needed to "make this understanding a reality—what needs to be changed in the governance and canons, in liturgy and worship, in opportunities for service, in education and formation, in the role of the

ordained, and in spirituality so that the connections are made and life in relationship with God is deepened,” Sedgwick said.

Expanding on Sedgwick’s observations, the Rev. Charles Wilson pointedly asked in his keynote on The Order and Exercise of Authority in the Church, “Can we come up with a vision of the church as a truly awesome channel of the fire and wind of God’s authority?”

In exploring the concepts of leadership, authority and structure and how they function in the church, he began by contending that “there are too many people who equate leadership with control.” But this is “very nearly the opposite of true leadership,” because a leader is “one who inspires and unites the corporate effort with a powerful vision and then keeps the people free to pursue that vision in their own God-given creativity. In other words, the leader gets out of the way, fully expecting to be surprised and delighted in what happens,” he said.

In the third keynote, Deacon Susanne Watson of Iowa said that her excitement about the consultation revolved around the questions, “What if all the organizations that have ‘ministry’ somehow as their focus all came together in one place? What if there were an opportunity for all the ministers of the church to gather and talk about how it is that we’re redefining, how we’re reclaiming the meaning of ministry?”

As a member of the board for the North American Association for the Diaconate (NAAD) and the planning committee for the consultation, Watson explored her concern for how the church forms people “to move into ministry and orders, particularly through worship, spiritual development, education and training.”

The true value of the meeting, she argued, was in the different individuals with different perspectives, “bringing different eccentricities and gifts, all concerned about what we do with the rest of our lives after rising from the waters of baptism.” And yet all share an interest in “moving away from a consumer-provider approach to being the church, moving away from being communities gathered around a minister to ministering communities.”

Dozens of workshops catered to the interests of participants, addressing a wide range of theological and practical issues.

“The church is back but most people don’t know it yet,” said Arianna Williams, a young woman from Nebraska. For her the conference was a hopeful sign. Others were encouraged by the return of what they called “heart-based theology.” Another said it was about time the church addressed “clericalism as oppression” and an obstacle to total ministry.

Several observed that the consultation represented “a series of movements joining hands” to build a more open and responsive church. What they share is a determination to claim the role and identity of lay people and to “dismantle some of the tyrannies of ordination.”

The Rev. Melford Holland, whose Office for Ministry Development also supported the consultation, said,

“We got a glimpse of the future,” with “people coming together from different perspectives around the issue of the ministry of the baptized and how we live out the Baptismal Covenant in our daily lives.”

The Rev. Ben Helmer, director of the church’s Ministry with Small Churches said that “this consultation demonstrated how much energy there is around collaborative ministry development in churches of every size.” --by James Solheim

99-95D

Consultation tackles baffling array of issues in biomedical ethics

(Episcopal Life) If you could take a test that would tell you that you would contract a non-curable, terminal disease and die a horrible death before age 65, would you want to know? What if there was a procedure to alter your genes to prevent the disease--would you have it done? What if you conceived and could have the embryo treated to avoid getting it? And what should the church say about these issues?

On June 8-9, the Presiding Bishop's Consultation on Biomedical Ethics was held at the College of Preachers in Washington, D.C., bringing together theologians, ethicists, doctors and others who see technologies such as gene therapy, cloning and artificial reproductive techniques as issues that the church must address.

"A first question about our remarkable new powers over nature is whether or when use of [such therapies] represents an act of hubris, an infringement on God's prerogatives," said David Smith, director of the Poynter Center for the Study of Ethics and American Institutions at Indiana University. "Do these technologies represent a movement of human agency into areas that should be left in God's hands?"

Smith delivered the major paper of the consultation, in which he reviewed the theological issues involved in bioethics. Smith outlined three ways of approaching the issues, based on the work of Max Stackhouse:

- An Augustinian approach, which is extremely cautious about human intervention in God's creation. Under this model, therapies to cure disease may be appropriate, but those that seek to improve mankind, such as "cures" for short stature, are likely to be frowned upon.
- An approach in which it is our duty to try to improve our life, understanding our limits and our relationship to God as God's creatures.
- A progressive approach, which "rejects as superstition the idea that there are intrinsic limits to what we should do to improve the human prospect. Knowledge and skill are meant to be used to improve the world, and that fact is to be celebrated."

Each of these models has its pros and cons, according to Smith. For example, the middle view must wrestle with the problem of which "unnatural" processes to allow: "Say genetic treatments are acceptable for therapy but not for enhancement? Where is that line to be drawn?"

To a conservative Christian ethicist, donor gametes, surrogate mothers and cloning "are all problematical because they break the link between the social bond of marriage and the biological process of reproduction." But, on the other hand, this fails to take into account the real issues of infertility--and gay couples, as well. "Parenthood easily becomes an idol," said Smith.

Smith continued to discuss the church's role: "Genetic knowledge can be threatening; it can also contribute to a legacy of guilt. ... Thus, the church must be prepared to help people wrestle with the question of how much—if any—knowledge they are obliged to acquire." The questions include the impact on family members and future generations.

Another of the consultation's speakers, the Rev. Ellen Wondra of Bexley Hall Seminary in Rochester, N.Y., discussed theological issues involved in counseling persons with fertility issues or genetic diseases. She emphasized that people must be assured that their disappointments and suffering have nothing to do with sin.

“Sin presumes consequences to the disruption of relationship with God--we view it as punishment or correction. Suffering a negative experience of pain, loss, loss of meaning, shattering of trust--it hurts. Suffering matters. ... There is no doubt that people in these situations suffer.” --by Ed Stannard

99-096D

Agencies study ways to help refugees ponder their return to Kosovo

(ENS) The agencies that have been wrestling for months with the care and resettlement of refugees streaming out of Kosovo are confronting a new problem: How to help the refugees return home.

As Episcopal Migration Ministries continued to settle some Kosovars in new homes across the United States, EMM Director Richard Parkins flew to Macedonia to visit the camps where thousands of refugees had been gathered immediately after they had fled or were forced from their homes.

The NATO security force was being deployed in Kosovo, Parkins said after the June 9-13 visit, and relief officials were occupied with efforts to safely return refugees to that area.

“Most refugees are eager to return home,” Parkins said, “but they are weighing the prospects of doing so any time soon. It was fairly clear to our group that the resettlement abroad options should continue to be made available given the number who are likely to find returning to Kosovo impossible.”

The group later recommended that:

- Given the security risks—such as the presence of land mines—in Kosovo, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees must work to see that refugees are fully informed before they decide to return home. The option to resettle in other countries must be kept open for those refugees who will find it impossible to return.
- The government of Macedonia should be commended for its efforts to help refugees and should receive economic aid to offset the costs of hosting the refugees. The UN and humanitarian agencies should plan for winterization of the refugee camps if substantial numbers of refugees are unable to leave them. These plans should include providing for schools.
- The U.S. must work with agencies at the camps to clarify the ways in which it can help refugees with special needs, such as severe medical conditions. Confusion resulted in some refugees being refused resettlement because those doing preliminary paperwork for them did not realize that they were eligible for aid.
- The U.S. resettlement agencies should keep considering the cases of refugees seeking help in the camps and should do more effective outreach to inform refugees of the resettlement options available.

Meanwhile, in a separate meeting shortly before the Macedonian visit, 40 church leaders and high-ranking officials across Europe and North America agreed to make the Balkans a major focus for aid, development and relationship-building to repair the devastation of the decade-long conflict in that region.

The consultation, held in Budapest in late May, was organized by the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches in cooperation with the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. The Ecumenical Council

of Churches in Hungary hosted the event. Representatives of these organizations were invited, along with officials from Yugoslavia's main churches, churches in NATO countries and churches in the Balkans and Eastern Europe. --by **Kathryn McCormick**

99-097D

Bishop Donovan will serve interim in Diocese of New Jersey

(ENS) The Standing Committee of the Diocese of New Jersey announced May 26 that it had "unanimously and enthusiastically" called Bishop Herbert A. Donovan Jr. to serve as assisting bishop in the diocese, effective June 1. After his 1993 retirement as bishop of Arkansas, he was vicar of Trinity Church in Manhattan and then interim bishop of Chicago. He is currently serving as coordinator of the College of Bishops, which meets annually at the General Theological Seminary in New York. He was secretary of the House of Bishops for 12 years.

"It is the expectation of the Standing Committee that in January we will have an assisting bishop in place who will be with us until the election of a new diocesan bishop," said the letter from the Rev. George Willis, Jr., president of the committee. Under an agreement with Bishop Joe Morris Doss, who resigned as bishop of New Jersey March 12, the diocese will not elect until that resignation takes effect in the fall of 2001.

99-098D

Dioceses of Rochester and Connecticut elect bishops

(ENS) Two diocesan bishops were elected at conventions held on June 19.

Bishop Jack McKelvey was chosen bishop coadjutor of the Diocese of Rochester on June 19. McKelvey, who currently is suffragan bishop of the Diocese of Newark, edged ahead of the Rev. Canon Gene Robinson of New Hampshire on the fifth ballot at the convention at St. Thomas' Church in Bath, New York.

The three other candidates included the Rev. Canon Mark Scheneman of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, the Rev. David Selzer of the Diocese of Western New York and the Very Rev. Gladstone "Skip" Adams III of the Diocese of Central New York.

Attention was focused on the election because Robinson, canon to the ordinary in New Hampshire, is an openly gay priest. He finished third in the balloting last year for diocesan bishop of Newark—McKelvey was second.

In Connecticut, Bishop Andrew D. Smith was elected diocesan bishop on the second ballot from a slate of six candidates. He is currently bishop suffragan in the diocese.

Other candidates included the Rev. Leander S. Harding and the Rev. E. Bevan Stanley, both of the Diocese of Connecticut; the Rev. Canon John E. Kitagawa of the Diocese of Maryland; the Rev. Martyn Minns of the Diocese of Virginia, and the Rev. Leslie C. Smith of the Diocese of New Jersey.



news briefs

99-099

Philadelphia event will celebrate ordination of women in 1974

(ENS) On July 29 the Diocese of Pennsylvania will host an event celebrating the 25th anniversary of the first “irregular” ordinations of women to the priesthood and how it has affected the church.

Keynote speaker at a special luncheon will be Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane of the Church in Southern Africa. A Eucharist at Church of the Advocate, where the ordinations took place, will begin at 5:30. The preacher will be Bishop Barbara Harris of Massachusetts, the first woman to be elected and consecrated as a bishop in the Anglican Communion. She was a member of Church of the Advocate and a crucifer at the 1974 ordinations.

The event will also look into remaining obstacles to the acceptance of the role of women in the church. “We still have a long ways to go in order to realize the fullness of what that ordination meant, especially in terms of its implications for our leadership styles in the church, our image of God theologically, our use of inclusive language liturgically, and our sensitivity to the poverty, the plight of women, and the violence against them around the world,” said Bishop Charles Bennison of Pennsylvania. He added that Ndungane, who chaired a section dealing with many of these issues at last year’s Lambeth Conference, is in a good position to “connect systemically all those issues...”

Jews and Catholics dispute crosses at Auschwitz

(ENI) Polish police removed 300 crosses from the former Auschwitz concentration camp after a year-long occupation of the camp’s “Gravel Pit” by Polish Roman Catholic nationalists.

According to a report, the removal of the crosses was a bid to end a long-standing dispute between Catholic nationalists – who set up the 300 crosses to remember the deaths of more than 100 Polish Catholics at the site – and Jewish groups who have strong objections to the presence of the religious symbols at Auschwitz, where more than 1.5 million people — most of them Jews—were put to death in Nazi gas chambers in WWII.

A government statement said the crosses had been dismantled and taken to a Franciscan monastery at nearby Harmeza. However, one “papal cross” that was erected a decade ago and was the focus of a mass in 1979 by Polish-born Pope John Paul II remains at the site.

The head of Poland’s Union of Jewish Councils, Jerzy Kichler, also welcomed the police action as a “step in the right direction,” but said Jews believed the existing “papal cross” should also be removed.

"This is an exceptional place for both Jews and non-Jews, and any disturbance violates the memory of the victims who died here," Kichler added. "We believe there should be no religious symbols at Auschwitz — not because we have a negative attitude to the cross, but because Jewish tradition does not allow us to pray for our dead relatives in the presence of symbols belonging to another religion. We count on Poland's government and church to respect our feelings."

However, Adam Szulc, spokesperson for Poland's Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference, said, he believed the papal cross should stay. "The cross is a sign of reconciliation and it should never be used for protests and demonstrations. But although this is a very painful and tragic place for Jews, I think they also should understand that people from many other nations died here too."

Australian Archbishop issues homosexual health warning

(ENI) Despite a nationwide controversy, George Pell, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, is standing by his claim that homosexuality is a "greater health risk than smoking."

According to a report, Pell's comments, made after he had refused communion to gay Catholics and their supporters wearing rainbow sashes at mass on Pentecost Sunday, have drawn a sharp response from a range of community groups and politicians.

Senator Andrew Bartlett, from the Australian Democrats political party, dismissed Pell's statement as ludicrous. Joseph O'Reilly, the president of the Victorian AIDS Council, described it as "inappropriate and offensive."

"The most significant hazard for gay men and lesbians," O'Reilly told the *Age* newspaper in Melbourne, "is the sort of prejudice, misinformation and ill-feeling peddled by so-called community leaders."

In a statement to the *Australian*, Pell said, "I am aware that many more people die of smoking-related illnesses than those who die from AIDS each year. But for the number of individuals concerned, it's a moot point which is worse."

He also told the newspaper that the safety of safe sex promoted as a means of avoiding HIV infection was "significantly overstated."

The report also stated that it was the seventh time rainbow-sash wearers had been offered a blessing by priests instead of the sacrament of communion since they began their campaign in 1997 for church acceptance of homosexuality. After being denied communion on Pentecost, they laid a wreath on the railings outside the cathedral in memory of young gays and lesbians who had attempted or committed suicide because of "homophobia in church schools".

Michael Kelly, a spokesman for the rainbow sash movement — of gay Roman Catholics and their supporters — said the group would continue its protests. "We realize we are in this for the long haul. The Catholic Church doesn't change its teaching on sexuality very readily, but it does change."

Kelly said the group was committed to working for justice, compassion and freedom. "People are being persecuted in the name of Christ," he said, "and we must stand up for ourselves against this persecution."

Raiser says WCC failed to foresee end of Cold War

(ENI) Konrad Raiser, general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has acknowledged that the organization failed to appreciate early enough the changes in Central and Eastern Europe that culminated in the revolutions of 1989.

According to a report, Raiser, who was interviewed upon returning from a meeting in Germany about the "role of the WCC in the Cold War conflict," said that during the Cold War, some churches and church organizations, including the WCC, were criticized for allegedly failing to support dissident groups of Christians in the communist-ruled countries of the East, allegations the WCC rejected at the time.

In a number of countries, some WCC member churches argued that maintaining relations with communists was necessary to ensure the practice of Christianity and the protection of church members. At the time, these churches and WCC leaders stressed that diplomacy behind the scenes was often more effective than public statements.

The WCC had been strongly influenced by the Ostpolitik of the late 1960s and 1970s in Germany, whereby Western governments, particularly the German Social Democrat-led government of Willy Brandt and later Helmut Schmidt, tried to promote better relations with eastern Europe, Raiser said.

"We were all convinced that this was the necessary step, breaking out of the Cold War confrontation," he said. "We felt we needed to do everything to maintain that delicate space where dialogue was possible in a situation of growing tension [at the time of the] nuclear arms race," Raiser continued. "This meant not the rigidities contributing to destabilizing pressures in the East, and at the same time avoiding seen in direct alliance with militantly anti-communist forces in the West."

As a result, dissidents in Eastern Europe had criticized the WCC "which in situations in Latin America, South Africa and certain situations in Asia entered into close cooperation with ecumenical action groups who were themselves partly in a conflictual or uneasy relationship with member churches. The WCC never dared to do the same thing in Eastern Europe," Raiser said.

Hong Kong's Buddhists disturbed by Christian comments

(ENI) Leaders of Hong Kong's Buddhist community are unhappy about a Christian appeal issued last month calling on church members "to confess the Hong Kong people's sin of worshipping the Buddha. According to a report, the appeal was made during preparations for Hong Kong's first public holiday to celebrate the Buddha's birthday.

The difficulties between Buddhists and Christians follow a decision by two Protestant organizations — Asian Outreach Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Church Renewal Movement — to hold a training session for preachers on the same day as the Buddha celebrations. A poster advertising the meeting referred to the Buddha's birthday, and declared that "while many people are finding their religion, Satan takes the opportunity of stealing souls." It pointed out that this year the Buddha's birthday fell a day before Pentecost, and described the difference between the two festivities as "spiritual warfare."

Several newspapers carried reports about the poster, declaring that Christians were ridiculing Buddhists. The Internet carried sharp reactions from some people claiming that Christians were equating Buddhism with Satan.

While Buddhist officials have refrained from criticizing Christians over this matter, they have privately expressed their "unhappiness."

But James Chak, a pastor and general secretary of Asian Outreach Hong Kong, told the *Christian Times*, that their meeting was not intended to challenge Buddhism. The organizations involved had merely wanted to hold a training session on a public holiday, a day convenient for Hong Kong Christians to attend. The meeting was also scheduled immediately before Pentecost to stress that evangelism needed the power of the Holy Spirit.

Anglican Church revolutionizing funerals in Kenya

(ENI) An Anglican Church initiative is likely to revolutionize funerals across Kenya, a country in which elaborate and expensive customs are traditionally linked to burials.

According to a report, the Anglican Church of Kenya approved a program designed to reduce funeral expenses by curtailing certain cultural practices such as the forcible seizure, by the husband's family, of household goods, livestock and other property from his widow after his death.

"Widows normally suffer twice on the death of their spouse, the loss of the husband and [then] the loss of property," said David Gitari, archbishop of Nairobi and primate of the Anglican Church of Kenya.

The report went on to say the church's decision was in part prompted by events following the death of Bishop John Henry Okullu. Kenyan "traditionalists" attempted to hijack the bishop's funeral by insisting that large-scale feasting be held, as required by tradition, but Anglican officials refused to allow it and the bishop's widow said her late husband had had a premonition of his death, and asked that no feasting be allowed.

According to the new guidelines approved by the church:

- Bodies should not be kept for more than a week in mortuaries before burial;
- The funeral service should not exceed two hours;
- It is no longer necessary for everyone present at the funeral to view the body;
- Clergy should firmly adhere to scheduled times to ensure an early burial, allowing mourners, many of them from distant villages, to make their way home in reasonable time.

In a recent radio interview Gitari said funerals and related practices were sapping the incomes of the average Kenyan family. Bodies were often kept in mortuaries for up to two weeks, and sometimes needed to be transported to the town or village of birth, often at the other end of the country. People in Kenya also believed in dressing the body in new clothes and new shoes, Gitari said. Such elaborate customs could set a family back as much as \$8,000 in a country in which the average yearly income is about \$1,170.

Germany's second Lutheran woman bishop elected

(ENI) Margot Kassmann, a leading ecumenist and theologian, was elected Germany's second Lutheran woman bishop

Kassmann, who has described her victory as a "sign of hope" for the participation of women in the church, was elected to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover, with 52 of the 98 members' votes.

She will be inducted as bishop on September 4 and will succeed Bishop Horst Hirschler, who is retiring.

Kassmann is currently general secretary of the German Protestant Church Congress, which brings together thousands of predominantly young people every two years for a five-day celebration combining worship, bible study and debates on church life and society.

"The Church Congress has been a young people's movement," Kassmann said. "I'm not young any more, although among the bishops I am. I hope in my ministry to encourage young people to take responsibility as part of the church."

She said, as bishop, she would continue to promote the issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Germany's first female Lutheran bishop, Maria Jepsen, was elected in 1992. The member churches of the Geneva-based Lutheran World Federation (LWF), have among them a total of eight women bishops.

Robertson faces problems on both sides of the Atlantic

(ENI) Richard Holloway, primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, has praised a decision by the Bank of Scotland to withdraw from a deal with the prominent American television evangelist Pat Robertson, describing Robertson's views as "the kind of Christianity that is offensive to many Scottish people."

According to a report, the Bank of Scotland had planned to launch a telephone banking service in the United States in partnership with Robertson. However, the announcement of the plans led to widespread protests boiling over when Robertson described Scotland as a "dark place" where gays were prominent.

Holloway said, "Those of us who've known Pat Robertson's record have been pointing out that the man is an apostle of prejudice and bigotry. This is a man who has dismissed many groups of people, and many of the things he has said would be of doubtful legality in this country."

Holloway, who supports gay rights including the ordination of homosexuals, denied he was pursuing his own agenda in attacking Robertson. "This is about much more than that," he said.

Reports say, the Bank of Scotland has spent \$5.6 million to end its association with Robertson's company but the bank refused to confirm the figure. "It's a matter between us and Robertson Financial Services," a spokeswoman said.

The bank's initial decision to work with him was "based purely on business reasons," the spokeswoman added. Access to Robertson's database of potential customers is understood to be a key reason for the bank's interest.

Canterbury Cathedral Choir tour highly successful

(ACNS) The Canterbury Cathedral Choir, one of the world's preeminent choral ensembles, recently completed a highly successful 15 day tour of the U.S. and Canada.

The choir, a performing organization with an international reputation for high standards, is the residential musical ensemble for the spiritual seat of the 70 million member worldwide Anglican Communion, which reaches into more than 160 countries. As the birthplace of English Christianity and the church home to 103 archbishops of the Anglican Church, Canterbury Cathedral has become sacred to pilgrims as an international shrine.

The choir has conducted critically acclaimed tours in Europe and North America — including a highly successful tour of the U.S. and Canada in 1994. In 1997, the choir celebrated the 1400th anniversary of the arrival of St. Augustine in Canterbury with concerts in Rome and throughout France. That same year, the Cathedral hosted an American Children's Choir Festival with over 400 participants.

Diocese of Western Michigan starts youth fund

(ENS) An endowment fund has been established to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the formation of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan. A goal of \$125,000 has been established for this fund and it has been designated in its entirety for youth programs among the ministries of the diocese.

Bishop Edward L. Lee Jr., said, "In this anniversary year, it's one thing to celebrate the past, but I believe we must do something tangible to affirm and build the future. It has been a very long time since the diocese has been challenged to raise a substantial amount of money for a ministry project that will benefit an important segment of our diocesan family, namely our young people. I believe we are capable of achieving this goal."

Lee also said that everyone throughout the diocese would be solicited and challenged to give or pledge to the Fund, with himself and the diocesan executive council starting things off. Young people of all ages will also be asked to give, even if its only \$1.25. Variations of the 125 figure will provide suggested giving amounts. For example: \$12.50, \$125, \$1,250 even \$12,500.

The report concluded with Lee saying, "Over and over again the word has come back to diocesan leadership from clergy and parishioners alike: As a diocese, ministry for, by and with our youth is critical and essential and our anniversary year gives us a unique opportunity to establish an enduring base for that ministry in the years and decades to come."

The Sisters of Saint Gregory: A religious community is born

(ENS) The inauguration of a new religious community for women in the Episcopal Church will take place this summer at the Annual Convocation of the Brotherhood of Saint Gregory.

In 1987 the brotherhood created a community-in-formation called the Companion Sisterhood of Saint Gregory, an order for women following the same Rule and participating fully in the training and the life of the brotherhood, yet with the goal of eventual autonomy. That goal will be achieved.

Catherine S. Roskam, bishop suffragan of the Diocese of New York, has been chosen as the sisterhood's episcopal visitor. Roskam will be the celebrant and preacher at this service, during which Sr. Clare Connell will be instituted as the first superior of the order. Professions of vows will also take place at this time. There are currently eight sisters in the community and an additional five are to be admitted to the postulancy.

As with the brotherhood, membership in the Sisters of Saint Gregory is open to clergy and lay, those married and single, following a common Rule but living individually, in small groups or with their families. The sisters support themselves and the community through secular or church-related employment. Anyone interested in receiving further information should contact Sr. Carin Bridgit Delfs, SSG, 4041 Dresden Drive, Winston-Salem, NC 27104-1531.

California churches to celebrate 150 Years

(ENS) More than 30,000 Episcopalians — 86 churches in six counties — will celebrate the church's first 150 years in California with a series of events starting in July that will culminate 15 months later in a colorful festival to be held in Golden Gate Park.

"With a variety of worship services, concerts, publications, lectures, workshops, parties and tours, the sesquicentennial will appeal to many interests," said William E. Swing, bishop of California.

According to a report, the events will feature some of the most prominent clergy and lay people in the 70-million member worldwide Anglican Communion, including the presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, Frank T. Griswold.

Also participating will be Bay Area writers, painters, musicians, athletes, business people and government officials whose work has been shaped by their practice of the Anglican faith.

The anniversary will recall the tumultuous days of 1849, when the Bay Area swarmed with new settlers. Along with prospectors, speculators and con men, the region acquired a tenacious group of men and women intent on building a genuine community amidst the boom-town atmosphere. They asked church leaders in New York to send them a member of the clergy to start a congregation.

Cuban Protestant celebration a success

(NCC) The ecumenical Protestant celebration in Havana's Revolution Square, on June 20, was "very successful and a very strong witness to their belief in Jesus Christ," said the Rev. Dr. Joan B. Campbell, general secretary of the National Council of Churches (NCC).

Campbell, who led a 20-member NCC delegation, was cheered and applauded by a crowd when she said it was time for the United States to end its embargo against Cuba and ask forgiveness for the suffering the embargo has created.

"For Christians, there are no embargos, no barriers," she told the crowd. "We find a way to talk to each other across all the divisions our governments create for us."

Those assembled included Cuba's President Fidel Castro along with several members of his cabinet. Castro "sat, listened, never spoke," Campbell said. "He didn't ask to speak and didn't consider it proper. His respect was very apparent."

People from all over Cuba streamed into Revolution Square from all directions, carrying signs that said "Jesus Lives," "Justice, Peace and Unity" and "Let There Be Peace." The tightly choreographed, three-hour celebration included hymns, prayers, a 45-minute sermon, a dramatic interpretation of Scripture, an orchestra, ballet and special music in styles from rap to classical.

According to the Cuban Council of Churches Studies Center, 300,000 Protestants and 280,000 Roman Catholics worship regularly in Cuba. Members at the Cuban Council of Churches, some of which are more than 100 years old, are deeply rooted in Cuban society. The Methodist Church in Cuba has tripled its membership in the past five years, the Presbyterian Church in Cuba is among the fastest growing Presbyterian churches in the world.

"The evangelical churches in Cuba have, for a long time, nourished the dream of celebrating a great Evangelical event in which all Evangelical churches could come together," according to a statement from the Cuban Council of Churches. "Never before had they the conditions and the possibilities to make this dream to become true. It is precisely now when they feel themselves capable to undertake this adventure of faith. Not with the purpose of

proselytism, but with the aim of promoting Love, Peace and Unity among the Evangelicals in Cuba and among the whole Cuban people.”

Archbishop Carey remembers Basil Hume

(ENI) Archbishop Basil Hume, who died of cancer on June 17, never wanted to lead the Catholic Church in England and Wales and had no designs on the papacy though he was often talked about as “papabile.”

According to a report, Hume was a diffident Benedictine priest who would have been happy to spend his life at his beloved Ampleforth Abbey in north Yorkshire. But instead was the surprise choice in 1976 to take over from John Heenan as Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster.

Despite his initial misgivings about the announcement of his elevation, Hume went on to win a national and international reputation among bishops, politicians and believers of all denominations as a wise, compassionate and pragmatic man of God.

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey said about Hume, “He was rightly held in high regard for the leadership he gave the Roman Catholic Church, and for his dedication to the cause of ecumenism. But for many ordinary people — Catholics and non-Catholics; believers and non-believers — it was his personal qualities, especially his humility and compassion, that gave him a special place in their hearts.”

Anglicans and Baptists schedule official conversations

(Baptist World Alliance) The Baptist World Alliance has agreed to begin conversations next year with the Anglican Consultative Council “to show the world our openness in the Gospel, our common faith in Jesus Christ and our desire for active fellowship as God’s people.” At a May 25 meeting, representatives agreed that the dialogue would help each to learn from the other, to understand similarities and differences between the two communities, to identify major theological and polity issues and to look for ways to cooperate in mission activities. The dialogues were first proposed eight years ago but postponed. Last summer’s Lambeth Conference of the world’s Anglican bishops encouraged the dialogues.

WCC’s Faith and Order Commission explores new role

(WCC) The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches is looking at organizational issues in light of mandates emerging from the Eighth Assembly last December in Zimbabwe. The commission is now part of the new cluster on Issues and Themes, where it will relate more closely to the council’s programs in missions, justice, peace and creation.

The partnership “enables an engagement between an understanding of the content of faith as given and of the content of faith as worked out or learned through the experience of life,” said the commission’s director, the Rev. Samuel Kobia, a Methodist from Kenya. The commission will provide essential support for the cluster’s work for justice, peace and the struggle against violence, he predicted.

Yet some expressed concerns that the new structure might limit possibilities. Father Jean Tillard, a Roman Catholic from Canada, said, “Without the old structure of Faith and

Order it would have been impossible to write Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry,” one of the council’s most important studies of the practices and ecclesiologies of its member churches. Kobia said that “there has to be room for specificity and in-depth, quality work.”

U.S. traditionalists join Forward in Faith movement

(ENS) On its tenth anniversary, the Episcopal Synod of America, a traditionalist organization opposed to the ordination of women as priests and bishops, has aligned itself with a similar organization in England, Forward in Faith, formed in the wake of the Church of England’s decision in 1992 to ordain women to the priesthood.

The action, taken at a May meeting in Forth Worth, Texas, is an attempt to align traditionalists across international lines and respond to openness to their theological position expressed at last summer’s Lambeth Conference of the world’s Anglican bishops. A resolution at Lambeth urged respect for those who continue to oppose the ordination of women, advising against any attempts to coerce acceptance of ordinations.

The Texas meeting also adopted a statement that discourages sharing the Eucharist with anyone who has “broken the spiritual communion in Christ” because of what ESA members would consider “false teachings.” The statement leaves application of the principle to individuals, since some bishops who ordain women are regarded by any measure orthodox on theological issues.

“With the vast majority of bishops of the Anglican Communion, we accept the desirability of maintaining the highest degree of communion possible,” the statement said.

The retired bishop of Quincy, Edward MacBurney, said that Anglican bishops around the world are “taking a very hard look at Anglicanism in America. The possibility that this continent might become a missionary province for an African or Asian province would be a wonder.”

Some at the meeting still held out the possibility of “intervention” by the Anglican Primates that could spur efforts to form a traditionalist province in America. Canon Bill Atwood of Ekklesia said that his meetings with international church leaders convinced him that “the faithful primates of the Communion are undeterred in their commitment to ensure that the Lambeth resolutions are implemented, and the faith proclaimed and defended.” He predicted that the situation in the Episcopal Church will be “center stage” at the meeting of primates next spring.

People

Jeanie Wylie-Kellermann and **Dr. Louie Crew** were recently conferred honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees from the Episcopal Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Wylie-Kellermann, co-editor and co-publisher of *The Witness* magazine, was cited “for significant contributions to the struggle for a just church and a just society.” She has been editor of the newspaper of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan and wrote *Poletown: Community Betrayed*, a book describing the decision to condemn a Polish and Black community in 1980 to make room for a Cadillac plant and the creativity of residents’ opposition.

Crew, associate professor of English at Rutgers University, was cited “for courageous contributions to the struggle for a just church. He has received fellowships from the National Endowment for Humanities, the University of Chicago, the University of Texas, and the University of California at Berkeley. In 1974 he founded Integrity to promote the dignity,

rights and vocations of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered members in the Episcopal Church. Crew has also authored nearly 1,300 books, essays, and reviews, including the first openly gay materials ever published in such journals as *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *The Living Church*, and *Southern Exposure*.

The Reverend Canon D. Bruce MacPherson was elected Dallas' sixth Episcopal Bishop Suffragan on June 5.

MacPherson, currently canon to the ordinary and executive officer of the Diocese of Dallas, gathered 84 percent of the clergy vote and 77 percent of the lay vote at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in North Dallas.

MacPherson is Dallas' first bishop suffragan since Bishop Robert E. Terwilliger (1975-1986).

Colleen Stevens-Porcher joined the staff of the Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief (PBFWR) as director of development and public relations on June 21. Stevens-Porcher has been contracted for one year to help develop annual and capital campaigns aimed to increase the amount of funds raised for relief and development programs around the world. She will also work to upgrade PBFWR publications and promotional materials.

Prior to joining the PBFWR, Stevens-Porcher was staff liaison for the recently-completed capital campaign at the Church of Heavenly Rest and public relations manager/speechwriter for David N. Dinkins, former mayor of New York City.

Roderick Dugliss, Ph.D., was recently elected dean of the School for Deacons in Berkeley, California.

Dugliss, a licensed lay preacher of the Diocese of California, has an extensive background in education. He taught at Stillman College in Alabama and at the University of the Pacific. He has also held administrative positions at Lone Mountain College and at Omega Performance Corporation, a corporate training firm.

In the 1960s, Dugliss served as a missionary, of the Episcopal Church to Japan, where he taught at the International Christian University.

The Very Reverend Wesley Carr, dean of Westminster Abbey, has appointed **James O'Donnell** as organist and master of the choristers at Westminster Abbey.

O'Donnell, currently musician at Westminster Cathedral, will be the first Roman Catholic to hold this post.



news features

99-100

Author and speaker Verna Dozier honored in her home church

by Sherri Watkins

(ENS) What more evidence could there be that big things come in small packages than the Diocese of Washington's Verna Dozier? She might shudder at the "icon" label, but this contemporary prophet has touched lives and transformed hearts through her many books and talks.

Many centuries before Verna Dozier, there was Amos, from the country, speaking out in the market square against the corrupt practices of merchants, who "sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes." In this century we have Dozier, a black female, spreading God's word in the nation's capital, across the country, outside its borders.

On May 30, about 500 people arrived on foot, in cars, and on airplanes from other states and foreign countries to pay homage to both Dozier and Amos at St. Mark's, on Capitol Hill, with the installation of a stained-glass window in their honor.

One of Dozier's friends and admirers, St. Mark's parishioner Dee Hahn Rollins, had launched the whole thing earlier by proposing that the church honor Dozier's contributions to their lives and to the wider church with such an installation.

Wasting no time, the church consulted with stained-glass artist Brenda Belfield about designing the window and set about raising the necessary funds. Following the mailing of a single fundraising appeal letter, the church received more than twice the necessary funds to bring the window dream to life. With the additional funds, St. Mark's is beginning work to establish a college scholarship in the Dozier family name.

After 81 years, Verna Dozier must strain to make out even the large, golden bundle of wheat in the market square depicted in the clerestory window, but she can describe the window scene none-the-less. "I'm the larger of the two figures to the left... in blue; I always wore blue. The smaller one in red is my sister; my Lois always wore red.... Amos is holding sandals, with coins falling from his fingers."

To stretch their hearts, minds, and spirits, Lucie Dozier encouraged her daughters Verna and Lois to make the Bible stories their own during nightly readings of sacred scripture. Concerned that too many clergy ignored issues of social justice in favor of a focus on spirituality, Verna felt an immediate attraction to the prophet Amos, who she describes as "the first voice of social justice in the Bible. He was infuriated by the flagrant ignoring of laws designed to protect the poor."

Third-generation Washingtonians, Verna and Lois Dozier graduated from the District of Columbia's Dunbar Senior High School—at the time the premier high school for colored

students. They moved on to complete undergraduate education at Howard University, where Verna later earned a masters degree, then went on to teach in the D.C. public schools. Reminiscent of the Delany sisters, the Dozier sisters never married and remained quite close—eventually moving into apartments at Collington Episcopal Life Care Community outside Washington. Lois died last year.

Following retirement from the school system in the mid-seventies, Verna concentrated her energies on a full-time ministry as a Christian educator and lay theologian, exciting human beings about Jesus' message. One of the most sought-after speakers churchwide, Verna has also authored several books. Her favorite is *The Dream of God*, in which she cautions that we are too often falling away from the dream God has for us "to follow Jesus and not merely worship Him."

--Sherri Watkins is editor of *Washington Diocese*.

99-101

Students' loneliness tops list of issues aired by college campus ministers

by Ann Ball

(ENS) Feeling old?

Today's entering college freshmen were born in 1981. Their parents' music was New Wave—their grandparents' music was The Beatles. The only war they know first-hand is the Persian Gulf War—the others happened before they were born. They are not only computer literate, they've never known a time without computers. Many have been raised in single-parent households.

These observations and others, unfolded during a panel discussion at the annual meeting of the Episcopal Society for Ministry in Higher Education (ESMHE) June 16 through 19 on the Tulane University campus in New Orleans. The panel included three university administrators who addressed the need for, and ways that, campus ministers could make connections with students and faculty members at the country's institutions of higher learning.

Loneliness is a major underlying issue for students today, according to panelist Pamela Bowen, M.D., a campus doctor at Princeton University. Today's students are "the latchkey kids," she noted. They watch more TV and use the internet more than previous generations. "And they leave e-mail all over," she added. "They are seeking intimacy because they're not getting it elsewhere."

This lack of intimacy leads to problems with drugs and alcohol, Bowen continued. The students must also contend with the threats of AIDS, campus violence and hate.

"I see these as health issues," she said. "We've got to do more with issues of social justice. And for too long we've ignored the spiritual dimensions of health."

Echoing Bowen's comments, Kenn Douglass of Boston University said, "It's really hard for students not to feel like a number on large campuses." We are "role-modeling" for the students, he added. "I think it's a big responsibility."

'Go where the students are'

Patricia Patrick, a minister to the 45,000-member student body at Michigan State University, urged the ESMHE participants to "go where the students are."

"Show up at their programs," she said. "Go to sports events, the cafeteria, all over campus. Word spreads real quick." She also encouraged the chaplains to get to know faculty members and other campus workers who are Episcopalians to build a sense of Christian community.

A similar three-member panel focused on "Why Campus Ministry Matters." Leaders David Krause of Texas Tech, Martha Sullivan of Tulane, and Jonathan Hayden of Howard University cited fellowship as the key element drawing young people to spiritual centers on campus. Sullivan stressed the fact that students are lonely. Campus chaplains can channel young people into supportive settings where their needs for companionship and security can be met.

At a morning address in Tulane's Episcopal Chapel of the Holy Spirit, Bishop Charles Jenkins of Louisiana welcomed the ESMHE meeting to New Orleans and startled some longtime attendees by saying that the Diocese of Louisiana had made college ministry the priority in Louisiana. "College ministry has made this diocese what it is," Jenkins said. "Twenty-one priests have come forward from this chapel and I don't know how many from our St. Alban's Chapel at LSU. Young people who could have chosen anything have chosen God as their ministry."

"We want to deepen the commitment of our disciples of Christ. We want to capture and inspire the minds of young people," Jenkins said. The bishop spoke of opening an Episcopal presence at Southern University in New Orleans whose student body is predominantly African-American. "We want to inform the culture of Louisiana that we can form the future leaders of Louisiana," he said.

During the questions-answer period that followed the bishop's address, one ESMHE participant from Province VIII praised the diocese's multicultural initiative. "I find your comments very hopeful that you're including all people in your vision," she said.

Growing membership

Forty-one of the 116 participants at the ESMHE meeting were new campus ministers, reported ESMHE President JoAnn Leach of Princeton. "Campus ministry is a vocation of calling—not a steppingstone to another job," she said. "The key thing ESMHE has to do is be an advocate for campus ministry. It is always our primary theme."

She observed that ESMHE has become a society in the truest sense of the word. "In the past, it was made up of full-time campus ministers," she explained. But since the church is unable to support as many full-time chaplaincies, ESMHE has changed, too.

"Now it is an organization of students, faculty, staff, lay, ordained, half-time, full-time—all are here," she said.

Commenting on his first meeting, newcomer Samson Gitau of Memphis State said, "It is a very hopeful sign to see 41 new chaplains serving in the Episcopal Church."

New chaplain Jeff Millican of Tulane added, "Hearing from others and making contacts has been valuable. It's good to be with people doing similar work. And for support too."

—Ann Ball is editor of *Churchwork*, the newspaper of the Diocese of Louisiana.

99-102

The Oasis celebrates its 10th anniversary

by Elizabeth Kaeton

(ENS) The temperature hovered in the high nineties on Tuesday evening, June 1, as the Rev. Bill Gannon's Dixieland band led the procession down the main street of Hoboken, New Jersey, with its rendition of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." They joined the rest of the congregation at All Saints' Church for the celebration of the 10th anniversary of The Oasis, the mission and ministry of the Diocese of Newark with all those who experience prejudice and oppression because of their sexual orientation.

The celebration was bittersweet, however, as it also marked the last time Bishop John Shelby Spong, who is to retire next January, would be with the congregation as diocesan bishop. As preacher, Spong noted the record over the past 10 years: Openly lesbian women and gay men now make up 16 percent of the clergy of the Diocese of Newark, two-thirds of the lay diocesan staff, and half the lay membership of the Standing Committee.

Slightly more than 40 percent of the congregations in the diocese are sponsoring congregations of The Oasis, and lesbian and gay people actively serve in their congregations as lay leaders. Many of these leaders found their way back into the church because of the witness and evangelism of The Oasis.

The Oasis has developed curricula to promote congregational discussion of homophobia, has developed a bible study of homosexuality and is currently providing diversity training and education for faith-based communities that examine the connections between prejudice based on sexuality, race, sex, and physical ability. A curriculum to raise awareness about the specifics of sexism in the church is due to be completed this fall.

Spong said that there is still a long way to go, however. "Institutions are not changed by rhetoric. Hearts are not converted by study groups," he declared. "The church has never thought its way into new ways of acting. It has always acted its way into new ways of thinking. The work of The Oasis will not be complete," he said, "until there is justice across the land for every one of God's lesbian and gay people."

The bishop and his wife, Christine, were honored for their courageous love and worldwide evangelism on behalf of the lesbian and gay community. A special award was given to Michael Rehill, diocesan chancellor and chief respondent in the presentment charge against Bishop Walter Righter, who was charged with heresy after ordaining an openly gay man to the diaconate in the Diocese of Newark.

The proclamation with Rehill's award stated that he "settled once and for all the canonical question of the ordination of lesbian and gay people, freeing the people of God to wrestle with the issue in their hearts and souls."

--The Rev. Elizabeth Kaeton is diocesan canon missionary to The Oasis.

99-103

Colorado church and an independent school build together for the future

by Joanna Patten

(ENS) Whiteman Primary School, a small non-religious school in Steamboat Springs, Colorado, had long ago outgrown its downtown quarters. Thanks to a long-term lease (for \$1 a year) on land owned by St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the school is now constructing a \$920,000 building near the church to house its 43 students. The church will use the school's classrooms for Sunday school. The unique collaboration doesn't end there, though.

St. Paul's 300-member congregation had also outgrown its present sanctuary, built in 1913 to seat 100. It breaks ground this summer on a \$1.8-million worship space, situated between the existing church and the new Whiteman school. The school will have full use of St. Paul's parish hall during the week. The church's worship space will also be available for community concerts and performances.

"Churches, and the Episcopal Church in particular, have historically been too insular," said Bishop William J. Winterrowd of Colorado, who blessed the site and the project last spring. "I would like to see more churches look to what St. Paul's is doing and engage themselves with the larger community outside their own walls in a very meaningful way."

The project's stated mission includes enhancing the spiritual, historical and educational values of the community. The school and church are accomplishing these goals by sharing community space, conserving land, preserving historical buildings, maintaining the integrity of Oak Street, and putting a space to multiple uses.

"It was an enormous effort to bring the school and church projects together," said Nancy Spillane, Whiteman primary head of school. "It might have been easier to do it alone, but we both ended up with much better facilities together than we would have had apart."

Each group is paying for the construction of its own facilities. The project is being built in phases: The school/parish hall building will likely be finished in 2000. So far, \$750,000 has been raised for the school's construction. The church will pay for the parish hall, estimated at \$281,000. The church will pay for its adjoining new worship space, estimated at \$1.8 million. To date, St. Paul's has raised \$1 million in pledges or contributions to the building fund. The original sanctuary will serve as an adjoining chapel.

"We have not found this level of collaboration anywhere else in the country," said the Rev. David Henderson, St. Paul's rector. "Other churches have leased defunct church school spaces to non-parochial schools, but we're doing it from the ground up."

Nearly 40 percent of the donations made to the new school have come from charitable foundations. Spillane said she is especially appreciative of their support because most foundations are telling her they are generally pulling back from funding independent schools.

"What appeals to them about our project is that it is truly an unprecedented collaboration, and a facility that will serve the entire community for concerts and other performances," said Spillane.

--Joanna Patten is a freelance writer and a parishioner of St. Paul's.

99-104

Vernon Johnson was pioneer in compassionate chemical dependency treatment

by Willmar Thorkelson

(ENS) Early in his fight against chemical dependency, the Rev. Vernon Johnson began to question the then-popular conviction that alcoholics had to hit bottom before they could begin to recover.

"Why do the people who have the disease wait so long to get treatment?" he would ask. "Why do they suffer so long? Since alcoholism is progressive and fatal, we see an urgent need to stop the progress of the disease as early as possible."

Johnson, a Minnesota Episcopal priest who died of cancer last spring, and his colleagues in the Johnson Institute subsequently became advocates of early intervention—a position that may be one of the priest's most valued legacies.

Because of early intervention, the jobs of thousands were saved as they were confronted by co-workers and professionals about their drinking. Many were sent to treatment centers and others treated in local outpatient facilities. Programs of intervention and employee assistance became common in the corporate world.

The effect of the illness on entire families was another Johnson emphasis. "He was convinced of the need to involve the family of the dependent in the recovery process," said an associate.

Johnson also addressed the need he saw for a program on awareness and prevention in the schools.

As a clergyman, Johnson was able to reach out to faith communities and to get them involved. Churches routinely made their facilities available for meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon and other groups.

"The church in the basement" is the way some would refer to meetings of these groups," Johnson would recall.

Despite some progress, he was not satisfied with the way either seminaries or medical schools prepared their students to deal with the problem of chemical dependency.

Johnson himself had a drinking problem and in 1962 entered the Hazelden Foundation, the nation's pioneer in 12-step-based treatment for alcoholism in Center City, Minnesota.

That treatment prompted Johnson to begin meeting with a parish action group at St. Martin's-by-the-Lake Episcopal Church in Minnetonka Beach, Minnesota. The group included families in recovery from alcoholism.

In 1966, Johnson co-founded Johnson Institute to help employers assist employees who suffered from chemical dependency. In 1968, the institute developed and implemented the first chemical dependency program at St. Mary's Hospital in Minneapolis, now Fairview-University Medical Center. This was the first of some three dozen such treatment programs in hospitals.

Johnson became nationally known with lectures and with his three books including *I'll Quit Tomorrow*, which has been revised since first published in 1973. More than 350,000 copies have been sold. In the book, Johnson estimated that 10 percent of the drinkers in

America will become alcoholic and that these people will not be able to stop drinking by themselves.

Relatives, employers and others can help awaken an alcoholic to his/her condition and its consequences by confronting that person with the facts of what he or she has done during the times they were drinking.

At the time the book was published, the Johnson Institute advocated therapy that consisted of four weeks of intensive inpatient care and two weeks of aftercare. But with managed care tightening funding, the number of alcoholics who get insured inpatient treatment has been sharply reduced, according to George Bloom, Johnson's successor as institute president. Instead of the 21 or 22 days found to be a significant breakpoint for effective treatment, the average time a patient now stays in a treatment center is four days.

Johnson served for 25 years at the annual summer school on alcohol studies at Rutgers University and was on the summer school faculty at the University of North Dakota and the University of Georgia.

--Willmar Thorkelson is a religion news writer in Minneapolis.

99-085

Jubilee, Debt Relief, and Poverty Reduction: A Biblical Message of Hope for Poor Countries Statement by *The Most Reverend Frank T. Griswold*

**Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church (USA)
for the House Committee on Banking
and Financial Services**

June 15, 1999

Introduction

Mr. Chairman and other distinguished members of the Committee, I am very pleased to offer this testimony in support of debt relief for the world's poorest countries. My name is Frank Griswold. As the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States, I am one of 38 heads of Episcopal and Anglican churches throughout the world. Together, these churches form the Anglican Communion, with nearly 70 million communicants in 164 countries.

Once a decade, all bishops of the Anglican Communion – nearly 750, including the 38 heads – meet at what is known as the “Lambeth Conference” to share common worship and celebrate the diversity of backgrounds, cultures, and thought represented by our

Communion. At our most recent gathering last summer, debt relief for the poorest countries was a chief topic of concern.

For the first time, there were more bishops from Africa than from any other continent. Those of us from rich nations, like the U.S., Britain, and Canada, were challenged to look at the effect of debt on the people of Africa and poor countries elsewhere. Bishops from poor countries were challenged to consider how debt relief could be used in productive ways, benefiting the poorest of society, not squandered. We all had to recognize that both bad lending and bad borrowing contributed to the current crisis. Surely you, as a body of 435 individual members representing diverse interests in this country, can appreciate how difficult it was for 750 bishops from around the world to arrive at a common statement. Despite these challenges, we adopted without dissention a bold statement for the cancellation of unpayable debts to poor countries and for responsible action from debtor and creditor countries, governments and NGOs, to use debt relief to benefit the poorest members of society. I have attached a copy of the resolution and report to my remarks.

Year of Jubilee

I believe two concerns undergird our statement in support of debt relief – the biblical call for Jubilee, and our ministry to the poor. First, the worldwide movement for debt relief – Jubilee 2000 – draws its inspiration from the biblical texts in Leviticus 25. God speaks to Moses on Mount Sinai of keeping a Sabbatical Year, working the fields and vineyards for six years, and then letting the ground rest, recuperate, on the seventh year. (Lev. 25:1-7) Many in academia, religious vocations, and others continue this cycle today, with sabbaticals every seven years. From this context of Sabbath, God then commands that after seven years times seven, there be a Year of Jubilee on the fiftieth year. “And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants.” (Lev. 25: 10) In the Jubilee Year, God calls his children to allow the land to lie fallow, to set slaves free, to return land to its original owners, and to cancel debts. (Lev. 25: 8-55)

The essence of Jubilee is related to suspending patterns – patterns of work, patterns of domination, patterns of acquisition. It recognizes the need for things to rest, to restore “right relationships,” and recover equilibrium in the world. There is little doubt that the Jubilee Year, as described in scripture, eluded Israel as a historical reality. Nonetheless, this notion of suspending the usual patterns, particularly restoring relationships among people and with the earth, remained an important element of early teaching and shaped Jesus’ ministry in his time and beyond. It remains a challenge for us today.

Combating Poverty

The second concern, combating poverty, is of course another great challenge to us as people of faith. For me, for the Anglican bishops, and for most advocates for debt relief, the reality that overwhelming debts push the poorest members of our earth deeper and deeper into poverty is cause to take action. These poor countries are caught in a cycle of debt they cannot escape, borrowing more money to make payments on old debts. Sometimes countries cannot service all of their debt. But largely, they do, and at tremendous human cost. In some cases, paying debt service takes 30-40% of their budgets, shifting money away from investments in human development, agriculture, clean water, and protecting the environment to pay back rich donor nations. Fewer children are educated because their governments have had to charge families unaffordable school fees. More people die of preventable diseases because there is no money for medicines or hospitals. Crops wither in their fields because government supports for pesticides are gone.

Should these governments make better spending decisions? Yes, they probably could better prioritize what little they have. But, while we can spend time finding out who is to

blame, and plenty of blame can go around, we must recognize that it is the poorest people, mostly without a voice, who end up paying the price for debts taken on without their input or concerns. I know no one will write off my credit card or mortgage. But I have chosen these debts and reap benefits from them. They are not forced upon me by previous generations and government elites for purposes I do not see. While we should consider carefully how this situation happened in order to prevent it from happening again, we also must act to help the victims.

And, of course, I believe we should pay our debts as a rule. But, again, that standard must be weighed against the cost of human suffering. In these poorest countries, the abject poverty and human toll is almost unimaginable by U.S. standards. Nearly one billion people live on \$1 a day. One in five children die before their fifth birthday from preventable disease. Yes, we have poverty in the United States. But imagine the homeless person you see in the streets of Washington, and then imagine that 80% of Washington was in or near that same condition. Such suffering cannot be ignored. Something must be done.

Legislation – Debt Relief for Poverty Reduction Act

Fortunately, we can take concrete steps to address the debt crisis, and begin to create conditions in which many of these countries can lift themselves from poverty. I applaud Chairman Leach, a new friend and fellow Episcopalian, and Congressman LaFalce and many others for their introduction of H.R. 1095, the “Debt Relief for Poverty Reduction Act.” This bill is carefully crafted to provide substantial debt relief to those countries that are committed to poverty reduction and good governance. The bill would (1) write off most debt owed to the U.S. by heavily-indebted poor countries, (2) make a substantial contribution from the U.S. to the HIPC Initiative, the official debt relief mechanism of the World Bank and IMF, (3) call for significant reforms of the HIPC Initiative, including providing greater debt relief, faster, for more countries, with greater transparency and civil participation, and (4) create a mechanism by which the money realized from debt relief would be used for poverty reduction, such as education, health care, and water sanitation.

I believe this bill fulfills a difficult task. It offers a Jubilee vision of debt relief, moving the United States into a position of world leadership on this issue. At the same time, it lifts up Lambeth’s call for debt relief to genuinely benefit the poor by creating sophisticated mechanisms for poverty reduction, accountability, and good governance. The bill mandates that any country receiving debt relief must create a Human Development Fund, into which the money that would otherwise have gone to servicing debt is directed for programs to combat poverty and protect the environment. Civil society, including representatives of NGOs and churches, must be part of the establishment, administration, and monitoring of this fund. This approach is modeled on the education fund developed in Uganda where debt relief money has been committed to education. Tanzania has set up a similar education fund, and Zambia proposes directing debt relief to HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention.

These developments are cause for celebration. But the aims of these and other countries cannot be realized without the financial commitment from creditor nations. Without funding, debt relief will not happen. I ask you, our Congress, to support H.R. 1095, to create the U.S. policy and mechanisms for responsible debt relief . . . and then I ask you to fund the U.S. share.

Estimates of the cost of this proposal are hard to solidify. But I am encouraged by the fact that the U.S. can purchase back the debts at a fraction of the face value of the original loan, at sometimes as low as 7-10 percent. This means for a relatively small expenditure we can provide a large amount of relief. Rarely are such bargains found that can help so many.

Also, through congressional support for H.R. 1095, the U.S. will be able to pressure other G7 countries to provide relief, multiplying the benefit many times over. At a time of U.S. budget surpluses and unprecedented economic strength, we must seize this opportunity to help the poorest members of our world, giving them a helping hand into the next millennium.

I thank you for the opportunity to share these thoughts and would be pleased to answer any questions.

Photographs included in this issue of ENS:

1. Will Campbell speaks to Episcopal Communicators at Sewanee (99-089)
2. Episcopal Communicators meet at University of the South in Sewanee (99-089)
3. Archbishop Ndungane of Southern Africa keynote speaker at debt conference (99-093)
4. Executive Council welcomed to Diocese of Fond du Lac (99-087)
5. Living the Covenant consultation celebrates ministry of all baptized (99-094)
6. Teacher and author Verna Dozier honored for her ministry (99-100)
7. With NATO peacekeepers in place, many Kosovars are homeward bound (99-096)
8. The Oasis celebrates 10 years of gay and lesbian ministry (99-102)
9. Archbishop of Canterbury receives warm welcome on South American visit (99-092)
10. Archbishop of Canterbury preaches to large crowds on South American visit (99-092)

(All photos are also available in color)

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